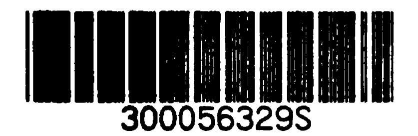

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THE

DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

WYCHERLEY, CONGREVE, VANBRUGH,

AND

FARQUHAR.





WILLIAM WYCHERLEY.

THE

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With Biographical & Critical Notices

BY

LEIGH HUNT.



LONDON.

EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

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LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

TO

THOMAS MOORE, ESQ.

This Edition

OF

THE DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

WYCHERLEY, CONGREVE, VANBRUGH, AND FARQUHAR,

IS INSCRIBED

BY

THE PUBLISHER.

October, 1840.

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WYCHERLEY.

CONGREVE.

VANBRUGH.

FARQUHAR.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL NOTICES

OF

WYCHERLEY, CONGREVE, VANBRUGH, AND FARQUHAR.

BY LEIGH HUNT.

WYCHERLEY.

IN collecting materials for the following lives, an eye has been had to the discovery of such additional facts, however small or even collateral in their interest, as might result from a diligent perusal of the works of the authors, and a reference to the literature of their age; and, accordingly, some have been procured, which it is hoped will not be unwelcome to the lovers of genius and of books.

The same wish to render the volume as complete as lay in the power of those concerned in it, has led also to the selection of such passages from the miscellaneous writings of the authors, as the editor, in the indulgence of a habit of that kind, felt an impulse to mark with his pen. Critical notices have been added to the biographical; and, at the conclusion of the whole, a general estimate has been attempted of their comparative merits, together with some idea of the moral spirit in which they deserve to be read.

WILLIAM WYCHERLEY, the earliest of these chiefs of our Prose Drama, was eldest son of Daniel Wycherley, Esquire, a gentleman of some property at Clive, near Shrewsbury, afterwards one of the tellers of the Exchequer; and he was born in that village about the year 1640. His ancestors have been traced, as residents on the spot, as far back as the reign of Henry the Fourth; but we believe nothing has been known of the family since our Author's time. A correspondent of the "Gentleman's Magazine," who in the year 1796 took the drawing of their house, from an engraving of which our vignette has been copied, says it had been a handsome structure, but left in great measure to go to decay, and the remainder clumsily turned into a farm-house. The walnut-tree in the print was said to have been planted by Wycherley, but he could not vouch for the truth of the report *.

* Gentleman's Magazine, vols. lxxxi., lxxxii.

The future dramatist appears to have received the rudiments of education, either at home or in the neighbourhood; and instead of going to the university at the early period of life then customary, probably owing to its heterodox condition under Cromwell, was sent at the age of fifteen, or thereabouts, to the banks of the Charente in France, where he was introduced to the reigning circles of the Rambouillets and Montausiers, who converted him to the continental orthodoxy, or creed of the church of Rome. His theologian on the occasion, a natural one enough to a susceptible youth, is said to have been the Duchess de Montausier, better known to posterity as Julie d'Angennes, for whom the French poets composed the famous "Garland;" or still better, as the Mademoiselle Rambouillet of the Ménages and Voitures, the presiding divinity of the *précieuse* style of wit which was so pleasantly overthrown by Molière. But the Duke her husband, the prototype of Molière's "Misanthrope," and consequently of Wycherley's own "Plain Dealer," was himself a convert from the Huguenots; for whose church, while he was only a younger brother, he had been educated; and as he had that strong turn of his own for the didactic, which afterwards made him so severe a tutor to the Dauphin, it is not improbable, that although his wife had a singularly staid reputation for a leader of French fashions, and he himself was a most Grandisonian and self-satisfied personage, he would be no uninterested spectator of these enlightenments of the boudoir.

On his return to England, our Author, at the Restoration, became a fellow-commoner of Queen's College, Oxford; "but wore not a gown," says Wood; "only lived in the Provost's lodgings, being entered in the public library under the title of Philosophiæ Studiosus, in July 1660;" and he departed, the same authority informs us, without being matriculated, or taking a degree; though not without having been re-converted to the Protestant faith by Dr. afterwards Bishop Barlow, a shrewd casuist of those times, who contrived to keep his fellowship under the Puritans, though he had bantered their university proceedings in a pamphlet. We shall see, however, that this re-conversion was not our Author's last.

On leaving college, he entered himself of the Middle Temple, probably with little or no intention of studying the law; for according to the dates furnished by Pope, and repeated to him again and again by Wycherley himself, he must have written his first play, "Love in a Wood," the year before he went to Oxford, when he was nineteen, and his second, the "Gentleman Dancing-Master," the year after his arrival; —proofs of earliness of production, common to dramatists of his class, and no less explanatory of much of their character and defects, than creditable to their natural genius. At twenty-five he wrote the "Plain Dealer," which shows his acquaintance with courts of law; and two-and-thirty was the date of his concluding play, the "Country Wife;" by which time he had completed that intimacy with the town, which had weaned him alike from the huffish foppery and self-complacency of the "young gentlemen" of his first piece, and the equally mistaken, though sincerer, endeavour to be misanthropic in the second; leaving him, he thought, a shrewd, solid, and modest superiority to both, in the quiet impudence of the character of *Horner*. If Wycherley did not speak laxly of these dates to Pope, or imply a completeness in

their composition which only resulted from subsequent handling, none of his plays appeared either on the stage or in print till some years after they were written. When finally collected into a volume, or at least in one of the single-volume editions of the booksellers, their chronological order was reversed. The earliest was put last, and the "Country Wife" first; doubtless in consideration of what was held to be most attractive.*

It is curious to think of the young theological proselyte returning to England, only to plunge into gay company and the playhouses, and write his comedy of "Love in a Wood." He goes in like manner to the university to be made a Protestant, and compose the "Gentleman Dancing-Master." And as he seems to have become a student-at-law for the sole purpose of drawing the character of *Widow Blackacre* in the "Plain Dealer," so the trip to sea which he took, on occasion of one of our fights with the Dutch, appears to have been for no end but to write some verses denouncing its horrors, and to make his hero the *Plain Dealer* a sea-captain. This event in his life he has recorded in the title of the verses alluded to†. He most probably went as a volunteer, a circumstance not unusual with the gentry of that period; and for a reason we shall give when we come to speak of the play, we guess the fight to have been that with Opdam, the same in which his friend Lord Dorset was present, and that occasioned the gay verses, "To all you ladies now at land." It is no common evidence of the manliness and philosophy of Wycherley's turn of mind at this early period of life, (unless, indeed, it was the wit of a candid effeminacy,) that his presence on so triumphant an occasion gave him no sort of prejudice in favour of the glories of war; nor even led him, with the pardonable vanity of youth, to boast of his own share in them. Indeed he makes no mention of himself at all, except in the title of the poem. He merely seems to have thought both parties engaged in a truly infernal business.

From the period of this event in his life we know of no other till the appearance of "Love in a Wood," in the year 1672. This brought him acquainted with the Duchess of Cleveland, and it is said, in a very curious manner. The story is, that this celebrated mistress of Charles the Second, who took publicity so easily that she would

* "The chronology of Wycherley's plays I am well acquainted with," says Pope, "for he told it me over and over. 'Love in a Wood' he wrote when he was but nineteen; 'The Gentleman Dancing-Master,' at twenty-one; 'The Plain Dealer,' at twenty-five; and 'The Country Wife,' at one or two and thirty."—*Spence's Anecdotes*, (Singer's edit.) p. 161. We believe this to have been the order of the compositions of Wycherley, notwithstanding the contradiction afforded to it by some of the original dates of their *printed* publication, and its apparent refutation in one of the scenes of the "Plain-Dealer;" that is to say, we have made up our mind, in common with later critics, that the author did actually *write* his plays in this order, however he may have chosen to have them acted in another. A doubt (which turned out to be true) of the public acceptability of the character of *Manly*, in the "Plain Dealer," might easily have kept that comedy back, till the later composition, the "Country Wife," was performed; and this previous performance would as easily account for the allusion to the "Country Wife," subsequently added to the "Plain Dealer," when the latter was brought out. In the volume, however, now presented to the public, we have adopted the printed order, as the one the more consistent with appearances. The critical reader can still, if he pleases, go through the plays in the order in which we suppose the author to have written them.

† Posthumous Works, p. 235.—"On a Sea-Fight, which the Author was in, betwixt the English and Dutch."

lie back asleep in her coach along Hyde Park with her mouth wide open, called out to Wycherley's coach in Pall-Mall from her own coach-window, soon after his play had been acted, and upon the strength of a compliment which he had paid in it to the wit and spirit of natural children, saluted him by the plainest title of affiliation with which the illegitimate of the mercenary are wont to be greeted. Wycherley, agreeably to what was considered "good fortune" in those days, stopped his carriage, and turned, and came up with "the lady" (as Clarendon used to call her), and the dialogue is recorded to have proceeded in the following manner.

"Madam," said Wycherley, "you have been pleased to bestow a title on me which belongs only to the fortunate. Will your *ladyship* be at the play to-night?"

"Well," answered the duchess, "what if I am there?"

"Why, then," replied Wycherley, "I will be there to wait on your ladyship, *though I disappoint a fine woman, who has made me an assignation.*" [O loving and delicate age of Charles the Second!]

"So," exclaimed the lady, "you are sure to disappoint a woman who has favoured you, for one who has not?"

"Yes," returned he, "if the one who has not favoured me is the finer woman of the two! But he who can be constant to your ladyship till he can find a finer, is sure to die your captive."

And so, with this climax of common-place, and a conviction on both sides that there was no heart in the matter, these two poor people were bound to meet at the play, as they did, and to "make as if" they were full of love and tenderness.—Voltaire, in his "Letters on the English Nation," says, that the duchess used to go to Wycherley's chambers in the Temple, dressed like a country maid, in a straw hat, with pattens on, and a box or basket in her hand.

Pope, according to Spence, related the story of the meeting in a different, and probably truer manner; for Dennis's version has a taste of the literary cookery of the time. "Wycherley," said Pope, "was a very handsome man. His acquaintance with the famous Duchess of Cleveland commenced oddly enough. One day, as he passed that duchess's coach in the Ring, she leaned out of the windows, and cried out loud enough to be heard distinctly by him, 'Sir, you're a rascal; you're a villain!' (Most probably Spence, in one of his fits of dulness, had forgotten the real appellation.) Wycherley from that instant entertained *hopes!* He did not fail waiting on her the next morning; and, with a very melancholy tone, begged to know how it was possible for him to have so much disobliged her grace?" (Upon which, of course, the explanation of the allusion would take place.) "They were very good friends from that time; yet, after all," concludes the poet with naïveté, "what did he get by her?" (A very natural question.) "He was to have travelled with the young Duke of Richmond. King Charles gave him, now and then, a hundred pounds, not often."

Wycherley, however, was so proud of this intimacy, that an offence which Cleveland's cousin the Duke of Buckingham took against him, might be traced to the foppery of his dedication of the play to her, without enlisting in the matter a personal jealousy

that might have had no sort of foundation: for, though the duke is said not to have been without his gallantries towards the royal mistress, there was in general little love lost between those two noble personages. Wycherley, in this dedication, repeatedly speaks in strong and exulting language of the "favours" which her grace had shown him; and though he explains these favours to mean her having been to see his play two nights running, yet the vanity natural to a young author, the story already in circulation (according to Dennis), and the equivocal acceptation of the word, might combine to create a suspicion of its being intended to convey a more triumphant meaning; and the fashionable circles might be offended, whatever was the case with the lady. Be this as it may, mutual friends succeeded in doing away the offence; and Buckingham, pleased with a wit and conversation which no man knew better how to appreciate, took the startled offender under his patronage. He gave him a commission in his regiment; made him one of his equerries, as master of the horse; and helped to bring him into such intimacy with the king, that besides the bounties above-mentioned, Charles visited him while lying ill of a fever at his lodgings in Bow-street; recommended him to try the air of Montpelier for the recovery of his health (which he did); and what will astonish those who are acquainted with the exchequer-accounts of that reign, presented him with five hundred pounds to defray the expenses of the journey. But probably it was the fair hand of the duchess that opened the purse-strings on this occasion, grateful for some wit and sincerity of companionship which she could not procure at court; for Wycherley was a better man than he seemed in his writings; and his heart, albeit through his vanity, could not help being touched perhaps by such circumstances as Voltaire relates, and which are not at all incompatible with what is known of the manners of the time. As to the royal third party, he had infidelities enough of his own to warrant him in pardoning those of one of his mistresses, perhaps even to induce him to desire them, in order to save him from her reproaches. Charles had such an esteem for Wycherley as even to wish him to be tutor to his son the Duke of Richmond, whom he spoke of bringing up like a prince; but we shall see how this appointment was prevented. What, in all probability, crowned the favour of Wycherley at court, as long as it lasted, was the reputation which he had acquired for sincerity and manly feeling, and which must have given a very rare character to his homage.

Meantime, while these events had been growing, our author had produced on the stage, and published, his three other plays,—the "Gentleman Dancing-Master," in 1673, the "Country Wife" in 1675, and the "Plain Dealer," in 1677.* For want of a date for the event we are now about to speak of, we are inclined to put Wycherley's first marriage soon after the appearance of the last of the three; for the "Plain Dealer" was the occasion of it; and the circumstance with which the story commences looks as if the play had been but newly published. The once formidable Dennis, the critic, is again the authority for these amatory matters. It is curious that

* These dates are taken from the "Biographia Dramatica," not the very best authority, except where corroborated; but in some later accounts no regard has been had to the variety of editions. Any date, met with, has been assumed to be the first.

his importance should now be confined to the exercise of offices so gentle. Dennis informs us, that immediately after Wycherley had received the intimation we have mentioned from Charles the Second, relative to the tutorship of his son, he went down to Tunbridge, most likely for the purpose of refreshing himself with the ordinary attractions of the place; when promenading one day at the Wells with his friend Mr. Fairbeard, of Gray's Inn, it happened, just as he arrived at the bookseller's shop, that the Countess of Drogheda, a widow, young, handsome, and rich, came into it also, and inquired of the bookseller for the "Plain Dealer." The rest of the story shall be told in the words of its latest and best repeater, Mr. Bell, who, if we venture to think him inclined now and then to be over-thankful for a piece of address in others, in consequence of his own hearty appreciation of whatsoever is graceful towards the sex, has done no more than justice on the present occasion to the happy promptitude of this gentleman with the auspicious name, Mr. Fairbeard.

"Madam," said Mr. Fairbeard, "since you are for the 'Plain Dealer,' there he is for you," pushing Mr. Wycherley towards her at the same time. "Yes," observed Wycherley, with his usual promptitude and gallantry, "this lady can bear plain-dealing, for she appears to be so accomplished, that what would be compliment addressed to others, would be plain-dealing addressed to her." The countess replied to this sally, with "No truly, Sir, I am not without my faults any more than the rest of my sex; and yet, notwithstanding all my faults, I love plain-dealing, and am never more fond of it than when it tells me of my faults." "Then, Madam," interposed Mr. Fairbeard, who appears to have played his part in the scene with excellent taste and good-humour, "you and the Plain Dealer seem designed by heaven for each other."

The result of this dramatic exordium was the usual termination of comedy,—matrimony; and (as Dennis might have said) something not so pleasant afterwards, at the fall of the curtain. Wycherley waited on the lady, first in Tunbridge, and afterwards at her house in *Hatton-garden*, and obtaining her affections, is said to have been induced by his father to marry her in secret, for fear of diverting the intentions in his favour at court; a piece of craft, which according to the wonted fashion of that kind of wisdom, ended in producing the very evil which it thought to prevent. The discovery made the king regard the marriage as an act of contumacy, aggravated by disingenuousness,—a conclusion of the very worst sort for poor "manly Wycherley;" and though it is understood that the royal indignation might have been appeased in time, the Countess completed the apparent contempt of court, by a jealousy which kept the handsome dramatist away from it; not at all approving a place, of the temptations of which she was not ignorant, and which was still presided over by the fair and voluptuous dedicatee of "Love in a Wood."

Our author's consort, in fact, had been a "maid of honour" herself in the very honourable and perilous domain of Whitehall. She was one of the "Mademoiselles Robartes," mentioned in Grammont, daughters of Lord Robartes, afterwards Earl of Radnor; was married to the Earl of Drogheda during her father's Lord-lieutenancy of Ireland; and in the course of ten years becoming a widow, now occupied a house in the ever-dramatic but then also fashionable quarter of Bow-street, Covent Garden,

where she was the glory, plague, and torment of her beloved husband the Plain Dealer. She might still possibly "like to have her faults told her," rather than not be spoken of at all, especially if they came mended by fond lips into virtues; but there were faults of Mr. Wycherley's own, in his past life, perhaps in his present, which she could not construe into virtues by any process of imagination; and the consequence was, that whenever he went to meet his old companions at their favourite tavern in Bow-street, which unfortunately for him was right opposite the house, he was obliged to sit with the windows of the room open, in order that the fair Letitia-Isabella might be assured there was no female in the company!

The disasters arising from this unfortunate marriage did not terminate even with the poor woman's death, which took place before long. She seems really to have loved her husband, as well as such a temper could; and accordingly left him the whole of her fortune; but the title under which he claimed the property was disputed, and the law-expenses resulting threw him into such a series of difficulties, that his father was unable to extricate him, and the luckless dramatist lay in the Fleet prison for seven years! The Radnor family by this time were probably not rich. The Earl, her brother, had married the daughter of Sir John Cutler, the miser, who would not give the new countess a dowry. The sister's fortune may have become of proportionate consequence; and, at all events, Wycherley lost it. In his "Posthumous Works" is a poem addressed to Cutler, banteringly exhorting him to stick to his avarice as the *summum bonum*; whether in spite to his wife's relations, or in the forlorn hope of shaming away the cause of dispute, it is of course impossible to guess.

It would seem unaccountable that so long a captivity should withhold from the society which he had delighted, an author who was acknowledged to have a good heart, and who was gifted by his contemporaries with a title to special reputation as a *man*. But ill-luck, the character of not being worldly wise, perhaps real improvidence, at all events the difficulty of bringing his troubles to a close by one large sum, may naturally have perplexed such friends as an author is likely to have. And even his titled ones may have not been among his richest, considering the wants of their luxury. He told, however, his first biographer, Pack, that the earl of Mulgrave (Sheffield, afterwards Duke of Buckinghamshire) once lent him five hundred pounds. Why the king did not assist him, perhaps indeed why he withdrew his countenance from him in the first instance, may have been accounted for, not by his marriage, but by the strong partisanship of his attachment to Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, whose side, in the disputes with him at court, even when accused of treason and thrown into the Tower, he took with a fondness of zeal that does credit to both their memories. We learn this characteristic and engaging circumstance from a poem in his folio volume, addressed to the Duke on the occasion, and beginning with this uncompromising verse:—

"Your late disgrace was but the court's disgrace."

"Manly Wycherley" is conspicuous here, and no less so the reason why he was not likely to enjoy a life-long continuation of the king's favour.

Pack says, that while the author was in the extremest of these troubles, the book-

seller, who had profited largely by the sale of the "Plain Dealer," refused to lend him the sum of twenty pounds; a churlishness which, taking for granted honesty on one side, and pecuniary ability on the other, would certainly not have been shown to such a man now-a-days. But whether these stories were true or false, it seems not unlikely that Wycherley would have ended his days in prison, had not Charles's successor, James, happening to witness the performance of the "Plain Dealer," and being struck with the supposed virtues of its hero's character, which touched him on the side of his own claims to sincerity, issued orders for the payment of the author's debts in full, and settled a pension on him besides of two hundred a year, so long as he should reside in England. But in matters of pecuniary trouble, "it never rains but it pours," as the proverb says, come what sunshine there may betwixt. Even under this unlooked-for felicity, Wycherley's ill-luck haunted him in the shape of a bashfulness, which, while it deteriorates from our sense of his "wit," gives him an unexpected addition of good-will in our hearts, at the thought of such childish unworldliness in the "man of the world." He was too modest to state the whole amount of his debts, even to his friend Lord Mulgrave, who was commissioned to learn it; perhaps the more modest, because of his friendship; and the consequence was, an unliquidated balance of liabilities, which still weighed on his mind. Even when the death of his father, at a ripe old age, put him in possession of the family estate,—even then, being only a tenant for life, and unable to raise money upon it to a sufficient amount, he obtained but slight relief! and thus the irretrievable difficulty might now be supposed to have reached its climax; but a sense of dramatic surprise mingles with one's pity, at discovering, that the last desperate measure to which he was about to resort for the purpose of delivering himself, did but bind him in new chains for the short remainder of his life, and leave him free from the others, only to see it hasten its termination.

Wycherley had a disagreeable nephew (very disagreeable and unworthy, one should suppose, to be able to disconcert the last days of a man rendered philosophic both by good-nature and misfortune.) This nephew he could not bear to think of succeeding him. We do not very well understand the case, as it is variously related in the biographies; perhaps for want of the due legal knowledge; but it appears, that by a certain combination of law and matrimony, he thought at once to disappoint this nephew, free himself from his other annoyances, and confer, as he fancied, a benefit on a deserving object. He, therefore, almost *in articulo mortis,* married a young woman whom he supposed possessed of a considerable estate, settled a jointure upon her out of it, and applied a part of the proceeds to his own uses. In vain! He dies eleven days afterwards, in the December of the year 1715, aged 75; and if his spirit were to be supposed cognizant of what was going forward over his coffin, it has been asserted by some biographers, that he would have found his widow an impostor, and already in the possession of another man. It is said, that by a truly dramatic close of his existence, he summoned his new wife to him the evening before he expired, and having obtained her consent to a request he was about to make, explained it in the following words:—"My dear, it is only this,—that you will never marry an old man again." Here was the ruling passion of wit and humour strong in death; though Pope, adding

jest to jest, thinks it hard he should have debarred her from doubling her jointure "on the same easy terms." It does not appear that she would have baulked herself of twenty such. She went by the name of Jackson; and the alleged fellow-swindler, who subsequently married her, called himself Captain Shrimpton. Bethia *Shringston* was the name of Wycherley's mother. It was through the Captain and Theobald, that the volume of "Posthumous Works," which Pope had had so uneasy a hand in re-touching, came before the public. Wycherley's remains were deposited in the vault of the church in Covent Garden. Pope affirmed to Spence that he died a "Romanist;" and that he had owned that religion in his hearing. When people have not the very best ideas of this world, nor, consequently perhaps, of the next, it is natural enough that fear on some occasions, and doubt on all, should make them willing to abide by the church that claims to itself exclusively the power of solving all doubt, and delivering from all fear.—So Madame de Montausier triumphed at last.

The chain of these melancholy events, so closely linked with one another, has hindered us from speaking till now of the curious intercourse that took place, in his latter days, between Wycherley, the oldest wit of the departing age, and Pope, the youngest of the new. Wycherley, in the year 1704, which was the sixty-fourth year of his age, not being the everlasting young-old boy that Chaucer was, nor of the right faith in things poetical, published a bad volume of poems, full of harsh verses and insipid gallantries; and Pope giving the world his Pastorals about the same time, and being then sixteen to Wycherley's sixty-five, the two books appear to have brought the old wit and the new together. Pope, with the reverence natural to a young writer, diligently cultivated his new acquaintance, haunting his lodgings in town, (following him about, as he describes it, like a dog) and trying to entice him to come and see him in Windsor Forest. (Lady W. Montague says he did it for a legacy; but the charge is manifestly nothing but a bit of the spite and malice, to which her ladyship's fine brain too frequently condescended). Wycherley, on the other hand, always promising to go to the Forest, and always complaining of his irresistible itch of writing, wishes to get up a fresh volume of poems, and compliments his new friend, not yet out of his teens, with asking him to correct his verses. A dangerous compliment! Pope entered upon his task with more sincerity than comfort, asking, among other cavalier inquiries, whether he was to turn the "worst pieces" into "very good;" and implying, in that case, that it might be necessary to "re-write" them! The old man, unable to deny himself the pleasure of seeing his darling verses trimmed up, yet wincing under the approach of so slashing an instrument, compliments the "great mind" of his critic at the expense of his "little, tender, and *crazy* body." In short, spleen and impatience break out on both sides in the course of an anxious correspondence, till Pope, with hardly sufficient delicacy of forbearance, testily throws up his office; and though strong expressions of esteem afterwards passed between them through the medium of common friends, the intercourse was never renewed. Of the two, Wycherley appears to us to have been the less in the wrong; but then his experience left him the smaller excuse for not foreseeing the result.

From the letters that passed between Pope and Wycherley, and the recollections of

him by the former in Spence, we learn something of the habits and appearance of the dramatist. Pope put him in the list of those who had the "nobleman-look." He did not care for the country; was fond of serious and philosophic authors (Montaigne, Rochefoucault, Seneca, and Gracian), in one of whom he used to "read himself asleep o'nights;" and was vain of his handsomeness, the departure of which in old age he could so little endure, that he would sigh over the portrait of him at twenty-eight by Sir Peter Lely, and to the engraving made of it in 1703, (from which the one in the present volume is taken) ordered the motto to be put, "*Quantum mutatus ab illo*," (how changed from *him!*) "which he used to repeat," says Pope, "with a melancholy emphasis." Sir Godfrey Kneller said he would make a very fine head without his wig; but he could not bear the portrait when done, and Sir Godfrey was obliged to add the wig. Alas for a Charles-the-Second old age! Shakspeare speaks of a man who was "incapable of his own distress." Here was a man who was unequal to his own venerableness. He retained however to the last, in spite of the occasional "peevishness" natural to such a decline (unless Pope's own peevishness found it in his associate) the character he had always possessed of good-heartedness and sincerity. His contemporaries have recorded him as being of an intercourse as modest and gentle as his public satire was bold; and they all agreed in giving him, as an epithet of distinction, the name of his hero in the Plain Dealer, "Manly,"—a cognomen, to which perhaps his personal appearance helped to contribute,—for Rochester, in his "Session of the Poets," designated him as "brawny Wycherley," though the word was omitted in subsequent editions. Dryden, with his usual good-nature towards young authors, once invited him to join him in writing a comedy; but he modestly declined the offer in a poem of grateful panegyric*.

It is difficult to say which was the luckier in the failure of this proposal, Dryden or Wycherley; for the poetical part of Dryden's spirit, especially if he had written in verse, would have borne down the unbelieving prose of a man who had no such poetry in him: while, on the other hand, the greater, or at all events purer, dramatic power of Wycherley would not have known what to be at with the unseasonable and arbitrary superfluities of Dryden.

Wycherley has justly been considered as the earliest of our comic prose dramatists, who forsook the fleeting shapes of custom and manners that were brought to their gayest head in Etherege, for the more lasting wit and humour natural to the prevailing qualities of mankind. Etherege was the "dandy" of the prose drama, and Wycherley the first man. Shadwell had glimpses "in his drink;" but he was only a gross and hasty sketcher. Schlegel has missed a general airiness in all our plays of this class, through the whole range of English comedy, and Wycherley is certainly no exception to the defect. He is somewhat heavy as well as "brawny" in his step; and when he moves faster, it is seldom from gaiety. He has "wit at will" also, but then the will to be witty is frequently too obvious, and has too artificial an air of thought and antithesis. His best scenes are those of cross-purposes, mutual exposure, or the contrast of natural with acquired cunning; those, in short, in which reflection and design have much more

* "An Epistle to Mr. Dryden, occasioned by his desiring to join with him in writing a Comedy." *Posthumous Works*, p. 18.

to do than animal spirits. His style is pure and unaffected; and clearness and force are his characteristics, in preference to what is either engaging or laughable. We can easily believe him to have been a "slow" writer; not from dulness, but from care and consideration.

> "Of all our modern wits, none seem to me
> Once to have touch'd upon true comedy,
> But hasty Shadwell and slow Wycherley."

The truth of the application of this epithet has been controverted, especially by Lord Lansdowne, who knew him, and who implies that he contradicts it from personal knowledge.* But unless the loss of memory, which he suffered in advanced life, had altered his habits of composition, the question might appear to be settled by the interlined state in which Theobald says his manuscripts were left, and which was so excessive, that a stranger could hardly read them. The failure of his faculties, it is true, in this respect was so great, that Pope says he would copy other authors on paper and repeat himself, and forget that he had done either in the course of a few hours. On the other hand, Rochester's triplet has some more lines to it, not so often quoted:—

> "Shadwell's unfinish'd works do yet impart
> Great proofs of nature's force, though none of art;
> But Wycherley earns hard whate'er he gains,
> He wants no judgment, and he spares no pains."

Perhaps Rochester spoke of his younger efforts, and Lansdowne knew him at a time of life when practice had made him quicker. And yet, as Wycherley was not a writer of impulse, there is something of that kind of simple hardness in his style which looks like a slow growth. Congreve's agglomerations of wit have the same appearance of elaboration, though from another cause. Vanbrugh and Farquhar have more spirits, and a readier air accordingly. But we shall touch upon these comparisons, when we have done speaking of all separately.

We shall now glance at each play of Wycherley's, in the order of its composition.—The idea of "Love in a Wood, or St. James's Park," (for the Park was the wood,) was evidently suggested by the "Mulberry Garden" of Sir Charles Sedley,—a title suggested by a house of entertainment which stood on the site of Buckingham Palace, and the grounds of which, like the *Spring-garden* at the opposite corner, were resorted to by the gallants and masked ladies of the time, when they issued forth of a summer's evening like so many gnats, to buzz, sting, and make love. It turns upon a game of hide-and-seek, and other cross-purposes, between some of these "minions of the moon," and is worth little in style or plot; yet we think, upon the whole, it has been undervalued. It is not unamusing. It gives early evidence of that dislike of backbiting and false friendship, which honourably distinguished Wycherley through life; and there are the germs of two characters in it, which have been since developed by Hoadley and Sheridan,—that of *Falkland* in the "Rivals" (the *Valentine* of this play) and *Ranger* in the "Suspicious Husband;" whose name, with a candour that was to be expected from Hoadley's superior nature, was retained by him from the

* See the passage in Anderson's *British Poets*, vol. vii. p. 722.

Ranger of Wycherley. Compare, in particular, the immense yet pleasant impudence, and reconciling animal spirits, of the entrance of Hoadley's *Ranger* into the bedroom of *Mrs. Strickland*, with its manifest prototype in the second act of "Love in a Wood." The concluding stanza of the song in the first act contains the passage which is said to have been the origin of the writer's acquaintance with the Duchess of Cleveland.

Either Wycherley's memory must have failed him as to the early period of some of his compositions, or vanity helped to mislead it,—for he had manifestly gone to the same sources as Molière for the improvement of his plots, when he wrote the "Gentleman Dancing-Master." There is a similar amusing intrigue in it to that of the "Ecole des Femmes," carried on through the medium of an unconscious wittol, who hugs himself upon the fool he is making of the favoured lover; and the author, besides looking back to old English comedy for a Frenchified Englishman, has brought a formalised one from Spain, the favourite store-house of the comedy of the preceding age. The hero of the piece, who is made to personate a dancing-master, and to be always in motion whether he will or no, is very amusing; so is the suspicious old aunt, who sees through his incompetency: but, above all, there is an exquisite truth to nature in the egotistical effrontery of the father, who, after treating the aunt's suspicions with contempt, takes to himself the credit of making the very discovery, which she has all along been trying to beat into his head.

The "Plain Dealer,"—with the exquisite addition of the litigious *Widow Blackacre*, a kind of born female barrister, an original which he had doubtless met with in the courts of law,—is an English version, in its principal characteristics, of the "Misanthrope" of Molière, greatly improved, inasmuch as the hero is less poetically tragic, but equally contrary to nature and to the true spirit of comedy, inasmuch as he is tragical at all; and in one respect it is shockingly below the original; for it is deformed so as no other age but such a one as that of Charles the Second could suppose manhood to be deformed, and yet remain consistent with itself, by the sort of revenge which he permits himself to take on his mistress,—that of a possession of her person under the supposition of his being another man, and while he feels nothing for her disposition but hatred and contempt. Yet in this gusto of desecrated animal passion, fit only for some ferocious sensualist who believed himself as great a rascal as he thought everybody else, the wits of those days saw nothing to deteriorate from a character emphatically christened and thought "Manly,"—a name which it imparted, as an epithet of honour, to the Author himself. As to the rest, the wit put into the mouth of this much-injured Captain of the British navy is as forced, and not seldom as common-place, as the violent and solemn coxcombry of his hatred of all other vices but his own is ridiculous. Indeed all misanthropes, whatever be their pretensions in other respects, nay, in very proportion to their claims upon being thought exceptions to the generality of mankind, are, and must be, so far, nothing but stupid and immodest coxcombs, for daring to set up their supposed knowledge of themselves above the whole virtues of the rest of their fellow-creatures. In what has been charged, however, as unnatural in the characters of the two heroes of Wycherley and Molière, with

regard to their believing in the goodness of one select friend and one mistress, this, we confess, appears to us provokingly true to nature; for the same arbitrary will and pleasure that trumps up a man's own virtues to himself, has only to include the first convenient man or woman it meets with in the same spotless category, and for not a jot better reason. The feelings of the public saw better than the court-wits, and instinctively revolted against this play in spite of the exquisite scenes of the scandal-mongering fine ladies and gentlemen, the prototypes of those in Congreve and Sheridan. It is said, that the good-natured Duke of Dorset, who tried hard to take his own bilious temperament for a kind of misanthropy, but was too modest and good-hearted to succeed, was the first to reconcile the town to an approval of it. If so, perhaps the Duke's having been in the great sea-fight against Opdam, may serve both to account for the profession assigned to the Author's hero, and to corroborate a guess as to the particular battle that Wycherley himself was in.

In the "Country Wife" there are no such scenes and dialogue of continued excellence as those of *Olivia* and her visitors in the second act of the "Plain Dealer;" but the principal female character hits a point of more lasting nature, and is an exquisite meeting of the extremes of simplicity and cunning; so that with some alterations, especially of the impudent project of *Horner*, which would have been an affront in any other age to a decent audience, this comedy outlasted the performances of the graver one, and will always be revived whenever such an actress appears as Mrs. Jordan. Those who remember how that delightful woman seemed made for every trusting enjoyment,—how she could unite boisterous animal spirits with a brimful sensibility,—how she would come dancing on the stage at forty, a girl still in spite of her fat,—what a breath and music there was in her voice, and how the people loved it the moment they heard it,—how she would wear a huge buxom pin-afore, divide sobs of sorrow with the comforts of a great slice of bread-and-butter, anticipate a world of delight with rubbed hands and huddling shoulders,—and with what a cramming of all the powers of coaxing into one little syllable she would utter the word "*bud*," while taking her guardian's cheeks in her hands, as though it sprang out of the fulness of her heart, and formed her lips into the very thing it spoke of,—will sigh to think, that circumstances rarely produce creatures made of such cordial human clay; or that anything could have made a life close in sorrow, which had given to others nothing but happiness.

We have found nothing in the Letters of Wycherley, either to Pope or Dennis, worth extracting in this place; but from an extraordinary heap of bad and good in the three hundred and eight "Maxims and Reflections" written by him in his old age, we have selected some not unworthy of

"The satire, wit, and strength of Manly Wycherley."

(So wrote Dryden of him in one of his own strong lines.)

As wit is too hard for power in council, so power is too hard for wit in action.

Our hopes, though they never happen, yet are some kind of happiness; as trees, whilst they are still growing, please in the prospect, though they bear no fruit.

Believe your friend honest to make him so, if he be not so; since, if you distrust him, you make his falsehood a piece of justice.

We increase our losses ourselves, and club with Fortune to undo us, when with them we lose our patience too; as infants, that being robbed of some of their baubles, throw away the rest in childish anger.

Every little club thinks wit confined to it; as every small sect of godly professors think to monopolise salvation.

We reprove our friends' faults more out of pride, than love or charity; not so much to correct them, as to make them believe we are ourselves without them.

Lies, artifice, and tricks, are as sure a mark of a low and poor spirit, as the passing of false money is of a poor, low purse.

It is a very common feeling in us never to be satisfied with our fortune, and never dissatisfied with our sense and conduct.

Charity and good-nature give a sanction to the most common actions; and pride and ill-nature make our best virtues despicable.

The silence of a wise man is more wrong to mankind than the slanderer's speech.

This last is a noble observation, and looks profoundly into the wants of society. From the rest we may gather the amiableness as well as sincerity of the Author's character; who was so beloved in his time, as to afford a caution to sour, and therefore crude, moralists, how they put the worst construction upon what is not always best in his writings.

CONGREVE.

WILLIAM CONGREVE was the second son of Richard Congreve, Esq., of Congreve and Stretton, who was one of the thirteen Staffordshire gentlemen upon whom Charles the Second intended to confer the order of the Royal Oak, had the institution taken place. The late Sir William Congreve, Bart., the inventor of the rocket system, was the descendant of a younger branch of the family; but the direct line still survives at Aldermans town in Berkshire, on a property which came to it by marriage. The Stretton estate, on which the family had resided since the time of Edward the Second, was sold by our author's great-grand-nephew, William, who married a Waller; and it is now the property of Edward Monckton, Esq. An oak is still shown there, on a lawn, under which part of the "Old Bachelor" is said to have been written. But wherever such opportunities occur, some spot or other is pretty sure to be identified with the haunts of genius,—with the flights and warblings of the human bird. *Scriptorum chorus omnis amat nemus.*

The choir of penmen all delight in trees.

Our author's mother (a relationship always pleasing to ascertain) was Anne, daughter of Sir Thomas Fitzherbert, and grand-daughter of Sir Anthony, the celebrated judge, who wrote the work praised by Blackstone, *De Naturâ Brevium.* She had a maternal uncle, who possessed a house at Bardsey, near Leeds; and it was there that the dramatist was born, in the year 1669, probably while his father, a younger brother, and an officer in the army, was cultivating in Ireland the patronage of the Earl of Burlington, on whose estate he subsequently had employment as a land-agent *.

* For such of the above family particulars as are new to the biography of Congreve, we are indebted to Burke's *Genealogical and Historical Account of the Landed Gentry of England*, vol. iii. p. 412, &c.

It is curious to see how unwilling people were to take Congreve's word that he was born in England, and not in Ireland;—a dispute which Malone set at rest by the production of a register. Dr. Johnson, among others, seems to have "sullenly" begged the question against Congreve's veracity, purely that he might indulge in the following gratuitous piece of acuteness:—

"Neither the time nor place of his birth are certainly known; if the inscription upon his monument be true, he was born in 1672. For the place, it was said by himself that he owed his nativity to England, and by everybody else, that he was born in Ireland. Southern mentioned him with sharp censure, as a man that meanly disowned his native country. The biographers assign his nativity to Bardsa, near Leeds, in Yorkshire, from the account given by himself, as they suppose, to Jacob.

"To doubt," continues Johnson, "whether a man of eminence has told the truth about his own birth, is, in appearance, to be very deficient in candour; yet nobody can live long without knowing that falsehoods of convenience and vanity—falsehoods from which no evil immediately visible ensues, except the general degradation of human testimony—are very lightly uttered, and once uttered, are sullenly supported. Boileau, who desired to be thought a vigorous and steady moralist, having told a petty lie to Louis XIV., continued it afterwards by false dates; thinking himself obliged in honour, says his admirer, to maintain what, when he said it, was so well received *."

But Johnson, while he was thus detecting one infirmity in mankind, was overlooking another, in which he himself was indulging, viz.—a tendency to prefer accusation to proof. How could "everybody else" but Congreve say that he was born in Ireland, when his "biographer" said otherwise? And if they took his word for it, why should they not, merely because he *might* have lied? Southern was himself an Irishman; and in that circumstance the Doctor, had he chosen, might have detected another weakness,—that of wishing to make out as much wit and talent as possible for one's own country. A better ground of suspicion against Congreve would have been found in the general fastidiousness of his character, and in the infirmity of his taking conventional ascendancies for something superior to genius itself.

Though Congreve was not born in Ireland, he was assuredly educated there; first at Kilkenny, and afterwards at Trinity College, Dublin: where he had for his tutor St. George Ashe, afterwards bishop of Clogher and Derry, who had been the tutor of Swift. Congreve was but two years younger than Swift; and as the latter had been educated also at Kilkenny, and stuck to his friend through life, though of different politics, it would have been pleasant to fancy them under the same tutor at the same time. But whatever may have been the case with the school, somebody has told us that they were not together under Dr. Ashe.

On quitting the University, Congreve was entered of the Middle Temple; but does not appear to have paid any attention to the law. Having family, as well as wit and scholarship, he was admitted into every kind of good company; and probably soon

* Art. CONGREVE, in the *Lives of the Poets*.

discovered that he coul dmake way enough in life, without a profession, to suit the views of a man of no great affections, who saw little in the world superior to the union of wit and gentility. His first publication was a novel entitled "Incognita, or Love and Duty Reconciled;" which was said to have been written at the age of seventeen, but made its appearance at twenty-one. Johnson's convenient criticism upon it was, that he would "rather praise it than read it." Being of a less robust conscience on the reviewing side, it is our lot to have read it, without being able to praise. The author, though fresh from reading romances, already shows himself a man of the world, in the tone of his "love," and his notions of womankind. He was never young in that respect;—nor yet ever attained to years of poetical discretion. He aspires to be poetical nevertheless; and one of his fancies about his heroine is, that Cupid employs a quill out of his wings in "picking her teeth!"

About the same period, at Drury Lane theatre, came out his first dramatic performance, the "Old Bachelor," written, like the novel, "several years before," and, as he said, in his fine-gentleman fashion, to "amuse himself in a slow recovery from a fit of sickness." Dryden, to whom he had addressed a reverential panegyric on the translation of "Persius," declared he had "never seen such a first play;" and he, Southern, and Maynwaring, freed it from some inexperiences, to fit it for the stage. The play was fortunate in every respect. Davies says, that when four of the actresses, Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Bracegirdle, Mrs. Mountford, and Mrs. Bowman, appeared together on the stage in the last act, the audience were so struck with a group so beautiful, that they broke out into a fervour of applause*. The talents of the actors, Betterton, Powel, and others, were on a par with the beauty and vivacity of the women. And fame was followed up by more profits than theatrical ones; for Montagu, afterwards Earl of Halifax, and then one of the Lords of the Treasury, gave the author a place, —that of a commissioner for licensing hackney-coaches. Johnson says, that he "soon after" gave him another place in the pipe-office, and a third in the customs, of six hundred pounds a-year. These two offices, however, are probably but one and the same, which he did not receive till upwards of twenty years afterwards. Swift says he had but a single appointment for "half his days;" and with whatever spleen he said it, Swift surely ought to have known. Among minor instances of the new dramatist's luck on this occasion, Southern is supposed to allude to this comedy when he says, that on reading it to the players, the author pronounced it so wretchedly, that they had almost rejected it; but that subsequently they became so persuaded of its excellence, and the manager, Thomas Davenant, was so pleased with his conversation, that for half a-year before it was acted, he was allowed, upon Southern's recommendation, the privilege of the house;—no very great indulgence, it should seem, compared with the liberality of managers at present.

The author of one successful piece is easily persuaded to write another; but the impulse, though encouraged by the triumph, is apt to be of a less genuine sort, and more critical; so as to lose more on the side of felicity, than it has gained on that of good luck. The "Double Dealer," which came out at the same house the year fol-

* Dramatic Miscellanies, vol. iii. p. 417.

lowing, did not please like the "Old Bachelor." Congreve, in his adulatory dedication to Montagu, pretended not to care; but he smiled and winced at the critics like *Sir Fretful Plagiary*. Queen Mary, however, came to see both the plays; and Dryden addressed him the celebrated epistle, in which he hailed him as the successor of the new stage and the old, and touchingly bequeathed to him the care of his own reputation. On the queen's coming to see the "Old Bachelor," Congreve wrote a new prologue, in which, with no great modesty, nor in any very poetical style, he says,

> "By this repeated act of grace, we see
> Wit is again the care of majesty;"

and then he pretty broadly hints a comparison to his advantage with all preceding stages, ancient and modern. The writer of two such plays before he was twenty-six, might be allowed to be vain; but Shakspeare, and fifty predecessors inferior to Shakspeare, would not have talked thus. Their genius would have been aware of its deficiencies, by reason of its being something which the utmost stretch of Congreve's "wit" was not large enough to discern.

Drury Lane theatre was at that time the only one; and as the ruling patentees were men of arbitrary tempers, or were exasperated by coalitions to force them into different conduct, the monopoly tempted them into behaviour so offensive, that Betterton, and others of its best actors, finally revolted, and obtained a patent for a new one, which was set up within the walls of a tennis-court in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. Congreve's wit was in such estimation, notwithstanding the comparative failure of the "Double Dealer," and he appears also to have sympathised so strongly with the revolters, that they bore him with them to their new house; and as he had great sense and judgment, notwithstanding his spleen against critics, he had tacitly profited by the censures on him, and the theatre opened with a new comedy from his pen, "Love for Love," which was as lively and successful as the "Old Bachelor." The success, indeed, was so advantageous to the actors, that besides an author's customary profits, they gave their coadjutor a share in the house itself, on condition of his furnishing them with a play a year, "if his health was good enough." It is to be concluded, that his health was not good enough; for he was nearly six years in producing his two remaining plays. One of them, however, was the most successful he wrote, and the managers appear to have been satisfied. This most prosperous of his performances was his only serious one, the "Mourning Bride;" perhaps we should rather say, his only tragic one; for there is a severity of rascality, as well as an intricacy of plot, in some of his comedies, that produces upon many of their readers far too grave an impression. The "Mourning Bride" came out in the year 1697; and was followed in 1700 by the "Way of the World," which, as the former had been the most successful of his plays, was the least so, and completed that disgust with the stage, which a performer upon it, of a very new complexion, had begun. We allude to the famous Jeremy Collier, who in the interval between the appearances of these two dramas, astonished the play-going public by coming like a crash upon their "houses," and forcing the "men of wit and honour" to fly to the most amazing of all self-defences—that of their morality. We shall notice this battle, sincere on one side, half-confounded

on the other, and mistaken on both, when we come to the remarks at the close of our lives. The great success of the "Mourning Bride" was a pleasing instance of the willingness of society at all times to prefer the gravity of the affections to the levity of doubt and sarcasm. Our great modern novelist, Sir Walter Scott, strangely mistook a matter of fact in the tendencies as well as history of humanity, when he said that mankind at large prefer comedy to tragedy. The stronger sensation, and therefore the more popular, must of necessity be on the side of passion, rather than of the absence of it; and of the elementary feelings which all the world experience, rather than of pleasantries often rendered local and fleeting by circumstances of nation and fashion. None but a Frenchman can thoroughly laugh, even with Molière; and to a modern Greek half of Aristophanes is a jargon; but all the world can weep and be exalted with Sophocles and with Shakspeare. Far are we from undervaluing comedies and laughter. We heartily wish there were more of both. It is too often forgotten by the would-be rational as well as the would-be pious, that heaven made laughter as well as tears. But even the height of pleasure becomes serious; and it may be said, that the sweet gravity of the highest kind of poetry is ever on the face of Nature herself.

There was an incredible tradition, that when Congreve found "The Way of the World" not likely to succeed, he came in a passion on the stage, and told the audience they need not trouble themselves to show their dislike, for he intended to write for them no longer, nor ever again submit himself to the judgment of impotent critics. This proceeding has been pronounced not likely in a gentleman of his politeness! The truth is, it would have been a madness. Congreve felt the public censure strongly, no doubt; and betook himself, as a man of letters and fashion, to his calm airs of superiority and contempt; but fancy this urbanest of companions, who never said a painful thing to any one, suddenly giving up the habit of a life in order to rush upon the stage, and insult the town to its face, like a mad scene-shifter!

He yet made his appearance however, once more, on a new stage, which was that of the larger theatre erected for Betterton's company, on the site of the present opera-house, by Sir John Vanbrugh, whom the old actors had now detached, as well as Congreve, from the Drury Lane Theatre, and whom they appointed "viceroy over them," in conjunction with his brother wit. Referring to Vanbrugh's life, who was the more concerned in it, for what further may be said on this event, we shall only state here, that Congreve did little or nothing for his share of the management but contribute a prologue or so, and one or two miserable bits of operas; and then backed, in fastidious incompetence, out of the concern.

From this period, till the close of his days, with the exception of publishing his collected works in 1710, he betook himself to a private life, sweetened by a fame which he affected not to care for, and by the approbation of men of all parties, which he secured by occasionally saying a good word for a friend, and a bad one against nobody. What his finances were up to a certain period, or how they enabled him to live among the great, is a mystery. Swift's account of them has been thought a Tory libel:

"Thus Congreve spent in writing plays,
And one poor office, half his days;
While Montague, who claim'd the station
To be Mæcenas of the nation,
For poets open table kept,
But ne'er consider'd where they slept.
Himself, as rich as fifty Jews,
Was easy, though they wanted shoes;
And crazy Congreve scarce could spare
A shilling to discharge his chair;
Till prudence taught him to appeal
From Pæan's fire to party zeal;
Not owing to his happy vein
The fortunes of his latter scene;
Took proper principles to thrive;
And so might every dunce alive."—*On Dr. Delany and Lord Carteret.*

We take Swift to have been in the right, as to the fact of the single office. Congreve's receipts from his various places have been usually huddled together, as though Halifax had given them all, and at once. Probably they did all come from him, or through him; but it is certain our author was not made a Commissioner of Wine Licences till the November of 1714. His richest appointment, that of Secretary for Jamaica, followed in the course of the next month. Halifax died the May ensuing. The whole of Congreve's offices now put him in possession, it is said, of twelve hundred a-year, a very handsome income in those days for a bachelor. Up to this period, he probably lived according to Swift's intimation, in straitened circumstances at home, though magnificently in the houses of his noble friends; not the happiest possible condition for a proud man, or any man; though pride can sooner reconcile itself, than less assuming passions, to whatsoever it condescends to be convenienced with. At all events, whether proud or philosophic, Congreve repaid with interest what he received, by the charms of his wit and conversation; and men of genius, of all parties, would have handed his name down to posterity, had he done nothing else for it himself. Dryden may be said to have eulogised him as long as he survived. Steele dedicated his "Miscellanies" to him, and Pope his "Iliad"; and he was visited by Voltaire. Occasionally he wrote some verses which were handed about, or a prologue for some friend, or a paper for a periodical work, or epistle to some coffee-house wit. But he lived more like a man of birth than of letters; and his powers of amusement being equal to his fame, he became celebrated for his *bonnes fortunes*, and was always in tender connexion with some reigning charmer. At one time, it appears to be Mrs. Arabella Hunt, the singer; at another, he is residing in the same house with "Madam Berenger;" at another, and for a long while, he is the friend of delightful Mrs. Bracegirdle (whose very name sounds like a Venus); and during the last years of his life he was the cherished companion of Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, wife of the Lord Treasurer Godolphin.

Upon the subject of these two latter connexions it is proper to dilate somewhat, as they not only coloured his life and reputation, but form no inconsiderable portion of

the essential history of the man and his nature. The date of his first acquaintance with Mrs. Bracegirdle was doubtless that of his introduction to the stage. It is observable, that she not only acted the heroine in every one of his plays, but always spoke either a prologue or epilogue to it. Her appearance on these occasions is not less certain, than the dedication of the play to some man of quality. Gallantry and fashion always went hand in hand with Congreve. Among the exquisite portraits of stage contemporaries painted by Colley Cibber,—who could become serious, and even feeling, when describing a cordial woman,—the following one of this delightful actress remains ever fresh on the canvas:—

"Mrs. Bracegirdle was now just blooming to her maturity; her reputation as an actress gradually rising with that of her person; never any woman was in such general favour of her spectators, which to the last scene of her dramatic life she maintained by not being unguarded in her private character. This discretion contributed not a little to make her the *cara*, the darling of the theatre: for it will be no extravagant thing to say, scarce an audience saw her that were less than half of them lovers, without a suspected favourite among them; and though she might be said to have been the universal passion, and under the highest temptations, her constancy in resisting them served but to increase the number of her admirers. And this perhaps you will more easily believe, when I extend not encomiums on her person beyond a sincerity that can be suspected; for she had no greater claim to beauty than what the most desirable brunette might pretend to. But her youth and lively aspect threw out such a glow of health and cheerfulness, that on the stage few spectators that were not past it could behold her without desire. It was even a fashion among the gay and young to have a taste or *tendre* for Mrs. Bracegirdle. She inspired the best authors to write for her; and two of them, when they gave her a lover in the play, seemed palpably to plead their own passion, and make their private court to her in fictitious characters. In all the chief parts she acted, the desirable was so predominant, that no judge could be cold enough to consider from what other particular excellence she became delightful. To speak critically of an actress that was extremely good, were as hazardous as to be positive in one's opinion of the best opera singer. People often judge by comparisons where there is no similitude in the performance. So that in this case we have only taste to appeal to, and of taste there can be no disputing. I shall, therefore, only say of Mrs. Bracegirdle, that the most eminent authors always chose her for their favourite character, and shall leave that uncontestable proof of her merit to its own value. Yet let me say there were two very different characters in which she acquitted herself with uncommon applause; if anything could excuse that desperate extravagance of love, that almost frantic passion of Lee's "Alexander the Great," it must have been when Mrs. Bracegirdle was his *Statira*: as, when she acted *Millamant*, all the faults, follies, and affectation of that agreeable tyrant were venially melted down into so many charms and attractions of a conscious beauty." *

With this charming woman, not only Congreve is understood to have fallen in love, but Rowe; who, by the way, if he did, left no small proof of the heartlessness of

* Cibber's "Apology," 12mo, 1826, p. 102.

which some have accused him, in a bantering copy of verses upon her, in which Lord Scarsdale is encouraged not to be ashamed to marry her, though her father *did* keep an inn at Northampton.

"Do not, most fragrant Earl, disclaim
Thy bright, thy reputable flame,
To Bracegirdle the brown;
But publicly espouse the dame,
And say, G— d— the town," &c.

It had not been discovered in those days, that a charming actress was worth marrying for her own sake, in proportion to the evidences she had given of genius and a good heart. Rowe, with a spite that would hardly have been found in a greater poet, and that is doubly revolting if he had loved her, compliments her upon the offers of wealth and rank which she had rejected, in the very lines which ridicule her parentage and her profession. Even one of these grounds of objection is said to have been false. A commentator in Nichols's edition of the *Tatler* (vol. i. p. 215), designates her father as "Justinian Bracegirdle of Northamptonshire, Esquire," who "ruined himself, among other ways, by becoming surety for some friends." Be this as it may, hear Davies's account of the share which Rowe as well as Congreve had in the admiration which she excited:—

"Mrs. Bracegirdle was the favourite actress of Congreve and of Rowe. In the several lovers they gave her in their plays, they expressed their own passion for her. In 'Tamerlane,' Rowe courted her *Selima* in the person of *Axalla*; in the 'Fair Penitent,' he was the *Horatio* to her *Lavinia;* and in 'Ulysses,' the *Telemachus* to Bracegirdle's *Semanthe*. Congreve insinuated his addresses in his *Valentine* to her *Angelica*, in 'Love for Love;' in his *Osmyn* to her *Almeria*, in the 'Mourning Bride;' and, lastly, in his *Mirabel* to her *Millamant*, in the 'Way of the World.'"*

"Honest Tom Davies" proceeds to vindicate his heroine from the scandals of lawless "Tom Brown," who tells us that Congreve "dined with her every day, and visited her in public and private." The deduction thus intended to be implied cannot, argues Davies, be true, because Mrs. Bracegirdle was visited to the last moment of her life by "persons of the most unblemished character and the most exalted rank." He admits, at the same time, that Congreve's "assiduous courtship did not pass unnoticed; that he was constantly in her lodgings, and often rode out with her." Mr. Davies's gentle mystifications may be safely left to the reader's "candour" (to use a favourite word of those times). The toleration of polite life for temptations of the heart on the stage, has not been one of the least redeeming or sincere of its own claims to indulgence. Mrs. Bracegirdle's successor in the public admiration, Mrs. Oldfield, who was counted a model even to the fashionable world on every point but one, was intimate with the people of the "most unblemished character and exalted rank." Mr. Davies subsequently tells us so himself; adding, that the royal family did not disdain to see her at their levees: and he repeats an amusing instance of her address. The Princess of Wales (afterwards queen of George the Second) told her one day that she

* "Miscellanies," *ut sup.*, vol. iii. p. 360.

had heard that General Churchill and she were married. "So it is said, may it please your highness," said Mrs. Oldfield; "but we have not owned it yet."

From collateral as well as other circumstances that transpire in the literature of the period, we take the conclusion respecting Bracegirdle to be, that she was more truly in love with Congreve than he with her; that it is probable she expected him to marry her; that her expectations gradually gave way before his worldlier heart, probably to the ultimate consolation of her own, when he went to live with another; and that sufficient friendship was retained on both sides, to maintain an affectionate interest in one another for life;—in Congreve, because he was a gentleman and a man of sense; and in the mistress, because the memory of the very dreams of a real regard is too sweet, to let the bitterness even of its waking turn angry. Congreve visited her to the last, and remembered her in his will, though not generously. And his kinder friend took what care she could of his reputation. "When Curll, whom Dr. Arbuthnot (says Davies) termed one of the new terrors of death, from his constantly printing every eminent person's life and last will, published an advertisement of Memoirs of the Life of Congreve, she (Mrs. Bracegirdle) interested herself so far in his reputation, as to demand a sight of the book in manuscript. This was refused. She then asked, by what authority his life was written, and what pieces contained in it were genuine. Upon being told that there would be several of his letters, essays, &c., she answered, 'Not one single sheet of paper, I dare say.' And in this (rightly concludes Davies) she was a true prophet; for in that book there is not a line of Congreve which had not been printed before *."

Cibber speaks of her in advanced life as retaining her usual agreeable cheerfulness. Some few years before her death, she retired, Davies informs us, to the house of W. Chute, Esq., and died in 1748, in the eighty-fifth year of her age, bequeathing "her effects" to a niece, "for whom she expressed great regard."

What sort of charms the greater lady possessed, for whose society Congreve appears to have forsaken that of Mrs. Bracegirdle, with the exception of her admiration of himself, her rank, and the beauty common to the house of Churchill, we know not. There is nothing to show for her having a grain of the other's sense and goodness. She was daughter and co-heir of the great Duke of Marlborough, and became duchess in her own right, and wife of the Earl of Godolphin. She was at variance with her mother, the famous Duchess; but so was all the world. Congreve was older than she by eight or nine years. Lord Chesterfield, speaking of her husband on a political occasion, calls him "that cypher;" and intimates, that what ability he possessed consisted in "sleeping †." Now certainly Congreve was a man for keeping a lady's eyes and ears open, however short he might have come of her heart; and accordingly, he seems, for many years, to have been as regular at her Grace's table, as the wine. They had a good deal of music at the house. Bononcini, the rival of Handel, was

* *Ut supra*, p. 362.—He alludes to "*Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Amours of William Congreve, Esq.*" purporting to be written by a Mr. Wilson, but supposed to be the manufacture of Oldmixon. It contains the novel of the "Incognita," and is still to be met with on the book-stalls. Mr. Wilson himself, in his preface, relates the above anecdote of Bracegirdle.

† *Letters to and from Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk, &c.*—vol. ii. p. 82.

patronised there. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu has a passage on the subject, which reminds us that she too was so intimate an acquaintance of Congreve as to address very Lady-Mary-like verses to him, extremely resembling what in a male writer to a female would have looked like a declaration *. Perhaps this may explain the remainder of the passage:—

"The reigning Duchess of Marlborough (writes her ladyship to her sister) has entertained the town with concerts of Bononcini's composition very often; but she and I are not in that degree of friendship to have *me* often invited; we continue to see one another like two people who are resolved to hate with civility †."

Congreve however, though not old, was now growing infirm. He had led a free and luxurious life; had become gouty, and was afflicted with cataracts in his eyes, which terminated in blindness. To relieve his gout, he took a journey to Bath, in the summer of 1728, for the benefit of the waters; but had the misfortune to be overturned there in his chariot, which is supposed to have occasioned some inward bruise; for returning to London, he complained thenceforward of a pain in his side, and died the 19th of January following, of a gradual decay, at his house in Surrey-street, in the Strand, and in the fifty-seventh year of his age.

The Duchess of Marlborough took instant possession of the right of burial. On the Sunday following, the corpse lay in state in the Jerusalem Chamber; and the same evening was borne with great solemnity into Henry the Seventh's Chapel, and interred in the south transept of the Abbey. The pall was supported by the Duke of Bridgewater (whose first wife was the Duchess's sister), Lord Cobham (Pope's friend), the Earl of Wilmington (the dull man, whom Thomson took for a patron), George Berkeley (who married Lady Suffolk), and General Churchill (above mentioned, the friend of Mrs. Oldfield, and cousin, we believe, of the Duchess). Colonel Congreve, the deceased's relation, followed as chief mourner. In the Suffolk Correspondence are two short letters to Mr. Berkeley, which may be here given as characteristic of the Duchess:—

"*Jan.* 22, 1728-9.

"Sir,—I must desire you to be one of the six next Sunday upon this very melancholy occasion. I always used to think you had a respect for him, and I would not have any there that had not. I am, &c., Marlborough."

The next letter appears to have been accompanied with some memorial of Congreve:—

"*Jan.* 28, 1728-9.

"Sir,—The last letter I writ to you was upon always having thought that you had a respect, and a kind one, for Mr. Congreve. I dare say you believe I could sooner think of doing the most monstrous thing in the world than sending anything that was his, where I was not persuaded it would be valued. The number of them I think so of, are a mighty few indeed; therefore I must always be in a particular manner,

Yours, &c. Marlborough." ‡

* See them in her *Works* (by Lord Wharncliffe,) vol. iii., p. 401.

† *Works*, vol. ii., p. 135.

‡ *Letters to and from Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk*, vol. i. p. 330.

The word "him" in the first of these epistles, without any name specified, is touching. The other letter is slip-slop enough. A monument succeeded the funeral, the following inscription upon which was from her own hand:—"Mr. William Congreve died Jan. the 19th, 1728, aged fifty-six, and was buried near this place; to whose most valuable memory this monument is set up by Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, as a mark how deeply she remembers the happiness and honour she enjoyed in the sincere friendship of so worthy and honest a man, whose virtue, candour, and wit, gained him the love and esteem of the present age, and whose writings will be the admiration of the future." The old Duchess her mother, misquoting one of the words of this epitaph, said, "I know not what *pleasure* she might have in his company, but I am sure it was no honour."* But the most curious evidence of her attachment remains to be told. According to Davies, she had an "automaton, or small statue of ivory, made exactly to resemble him, which every day was brought to table. A glass was put in the hand of the statue, which was supposed to bow to her Grace, and to nod in approbation of what she spoke to it." †

This is as fantastic though not half so sensible as the whim of the cobbler, mentioned in the "Tatler," who had a lay-figure which reverently bowed and held out one shoe to him, while he was mending its fellow. A more particular account of this folly is given by a correspondent of the "Biographia Britannica:"—

"This lady (he says), commonly known by the name of the young Duchess of Marlborough, had a veneration for the memory of Mr. Congreve, which seemed nearly to approach to madness. Common fame reports, that she had his figure made in wax after his death, talked to it as if it had been alive, placed it at table with her, took great care to help it to different sorts of food, had an imaginary sore on its leg regularly dressed; and to complete all, consulted physicians with relation to its health."‡ As there seems however no better ground for these particulars than "common fame," most likely they are exaggerated. Some of them, from what we have seen of the Duchess's turn of mind, may easily enough be believed. Nor were they wholly to be despised. There is something touching, notwithstanding their absurdity, in the poorest whims connected with death and the affections; though they generally evince a want of imagination, and of faith in the spiritual and exalted. What the spirit has done with, had better be put away; and the thought be contented to wander where the survivor's own spirit must follow. Love is more in company there with what it has loved, unless it has been of the most material description, and is tied and bound to what its companion has forsaken. The probability, we think, considering the characters of both parties, is, that Congreve's wit and conversation were necessary to the slow yet sensitive mind and humorous habits of the Duchess, and that she consequently loved him with all the heart she had, and a great deal of obstinacy; while on the other hand, Congreve was grateful for an attachment that glorified him and was convenient, and felt for her all the real tenderness of which a man of the world was capable, and which vanity would exaggerate. His bequest to her was quite as

* Walpole's *Reminiscences.* 1819, p. 68. † *Dramatic Miscellanies*, vol. iii. p. 407.

‡ *Biog. Brit.* Second Edit. vol. iv. p. 79.

ridiculous in point of feeling, as her posthumous homage was in respect to the customs of society. With the exception of two hundred pounds to Mrs. Bracegirdle, the like sum to another female of the name of Anne Jellatt, and a few hundreds more to kindred who wanted all he could have given them (for the imprudence of a relation had reduced the family estate), he left her the whole of his property, which amounted to ten thousand pounds, "the accumulation (says Johnson) of attentive parsimony;" and though the "Biographia Britannica" accuses Cibber of mistake in saying that he made her his sole executrix, the sole executor having been the Earl her husband, yet it strangely overlooks in its authority the fact of a codicil amounting to that effect, and revoking every bequest unless she chose to ratify it, with the exception of the two to "Anne Bracegirdle" and "Anne Jellatt"—fair friends whom, in spite of his dotage or his slavery, (for his conduct, next to vanity, looks very like a regular henpecked weakness,) he chose, with the last dying spark of a gentleman in him, not to trust to the tender mercies of the all-grasping Henrietta. Mrs. Bracegirdle, who defended his memory, appears to have been in circumstances to which more than the two hundred would have been welcome. "Congreve," observed Dr. Young, "was very intimate for years with Mrs. Bracegirdle, and lived in the same street, his house very near hers, until his acquaintance with the young Duchess of Marlborough. He then quitted that house.* The Duchess showed me a diamond necklace (which Lady Di. used afterwards to wear) that cost seven thousand pounds, and was purchased with the money Congreve left her. How much better would it have been to have given it to poor Mrs. Bracegirdle!"†

Bravo, Doctor Young! With leave of thy very gloomy, mitre-missing, and most erroneous "Night Thoughts," this is the best and most christian thing thou didst ever say.

Few men, if any, thoroughly surmount those prejudices in favour of rank and title in which they have been bred, and for which indeed, as part of the dispensation and progress of things, and as equally gifts after their kind with ascendancies more noble, a hardy logician could say more than many would suppose. The man the most jealous of his independence, had need watch his nature closely, lest he find himself inclined to be more grateful to a duke than to a commoner, and to a duchess than an ordinary mistress. A great and exquisite musician (Corelli) who had the reputation of being a very amiable man, and whose compositions are of a nature to confirm it, left all his property away from poor relations, to a Cardinal who had patronised him. It should be added, however, that Corelli looked upon the property as derived from the patronage. In Congreve's case, (unless indeed the bequest was to pay his bill for wine and dinners!) the ten thousand pounds came, not from the Duchess, but from the island of Jamaica, and the office of hackney-coaches! We are afraid it is not to be defended, except upon the ground of excessive weakness, and of a class of intellect that ended with believing in nothing.

* The house which Young alludes to was in Surrey-street, Strand. Mrs. Bracegirdle lived in Howard-street, which turns out of Surrey-street. If Congreve left his house at this juncture, he appears to have returned to it in his dying moments. But perhaps he retained though he seldom lived in it.

† Spence's *Anecdotes, ut sup.* p. 376.

To judge from his portraits, Congreve was a handsome man, though with a face more smooth and regular than expressive of sensibility. He had high features, and a look between sensuality and foppish vivacity. The foppery, however, may have been added by the painter, and increased by the turn given to the attitude and the flowing peruke. There is a great contempt of coxcombry in his writings; but this does not imply exception from the weakness. Sometimes it argues a greater share of it. No man is so vain, as he who thinks himself free from all vanity. "Mr. Congreve," said Voltaire, "had one defect, which was his entertaining too mean an idea of his first profession, that of a writer, though it was to this he owed his fame and fortune. He spoke of his works as of trifles that were beneath him; and hinted to me in our first conversation, that I should visit him upon no other foot than that of a gentleman, who led a life of plainness and simplicity. I answered, that had he been so unfortunate as to be a mere gentleman, I should never have come to see him; and I was much disgusted at so unseasonable a piece of vanity."* Various constructions, it is true, have been put upon this intimation of Congreve's. Dr. Johnson pronounces it a "despicable foppery." Cibber characteristically looks upon it as an attempt to "divest himself of human nature." But Mason is of opinion, that it was the "indifference to literary fame," of a man advanced in life. And Dr. Campbell, the first editor of the "Biographia Britannica," thinks it hard and strange, that an author should be reproved for being so modest as to "undervalue his own works." The religious might discover a more serious exculpation. A Mr. Dingley (probably a friend of Swift's) told Dr. Campbell, upon the authority of Bevern the Quaker, that on a visit to Bevern in company with Pope, Congreve expressed sorrow for the errors of his youth, and "most sincerely wished that it were possible to obliterate all the offensive and impure passages in his works." † But setting aside the possibility that the Quaker's story may have been a pious fraud, or become exaggerated in its progress from mouth to mouth, Congreve never expressed any public sorrow for his writings, as a sincere penitent would have seized occasion of doing. Neither did his mode of life announce any feeling of the sort. And some verses which he addressed in his decline to Lord Cobham, show that his morals were of the old epicurean sort, though calmed and philosophised. The climax of his list of the goods of life is—

"Health, honour, and a fair estate,
A table free, and elegantly neat!"

"What" (exclaims he, at the crowning inspiration of this line),

"What can be added more to mortal bliss?"

Congreve had not got his gout for nothing. The conclusion respecting the Voltaire question we take to be, that our author, who was both a reader and thinker, and had suffered pain and evil enough to drive his thoughts to their depth, had really come to consider his works as no very wonderful things; and he felt perhaps, when reminded of them by a young and enthusiastic admirer (as Voltaire then was), some little irritation at finding the sum total of his powers and aspirations rated by no higher standard.

* Letters on the English Nation.

† Biographia Britannica, *ut supra*, p. 79.

There may still have been a vanity in this, but it was at least not a contented vanity, or one that recognised nothing greater than its own achievements. If, however, he affected to set the "gentleman" above the author, upon some abstract ground of fashion and refinement, *that* indeed was being a traitor to wit, and setting the less above the greater with a very madness of foppery; as though, in some dream of *dandyism*, he should have clapped a cocked-hat over his crown of bays.

Congreve's acquisition of the fame which has been deemed so perilous ("when all men speak well of you,") may be accounted for on two opposite principles, and will redound to his praise or dishonour accordingly. It may have been owing to unbounded benevolence, or to a calculating selfishness. But there may also have been mixed motives. Congreve has the solid reputation of never having forgotten any one who did him a service. And he always adhered to the Whigs, prosperous or otherwise. On the other hand, he continued to do this without giving offence to the Tories; and though he never forgot a benefactor, it is not told of him, nor does it seem likely from his writings, that he ever risked anything, or encountered any kind of martyrdom or privation, to benefit anybody. The best thing we find recorded of him is, his having given a young author a paper for a new periodical, and his writing it out with his own hand, "blind as he was" (says Swift). This, by the way, was in the year 1710; which was eighteen years before his death, and shows how early he was threatened with loss of sight.* But again, he bequeathed a pittance to his reduced kindred, and to "poor Mrs. Bracegirdle," and gave thousands where they were not wanted,

——"Adding the sum of more
To that which has too much;"

a "testament," as Shakspeare has remarked, characteristic of "worldlings." Congreve therefore might still have been

"Friendly Congreve, *unreproachful* man,"

as Gay called him; his company might never have been quitted by anybody with one pang of personal mortification, as Steele has told us; and even Pope and Tonson, in the fondness of their regret, might say of him, that he, Garth, and Vanbrugh, were the "three most honest-hearted, real good men of the poetical members of the Kit-kat Club;" and yet the conclusion seems unavoidable, that he was negatively rather than positively amiable, and must be ranked among the agreeably selfish. (What a blessing if all the selfish were equally agreeable!) We can easily understand how a man of his sort might be too good-tempered and sensible to discompose either himself or others, and yet make a rich duchess his heir, and leave a poor relation to sigh over the "Way of the World." If you want truer amiableness and more generous virtues, you must go to the greater world of nature and the beautiful, and not take the little world, miscalled the great, for the planet on which it is but a speck.

* "Congreve gave me a Tatler he had written out, as blind as he is, for little Harrison. 'Tis about a scoundrel that was grown rich, and went and bought a coat of arms at the Herald's, and a set of ancestors at Fleet Ditch; it is *well enough*, and shall be printed in two or three days." Swift's *Journal to Stella*.—See the paper in the octavo edition of the Tatler of 1789, vol. iv. p. 595. It was one of a New Tatler, which was to succeed Steele's. By the "*young* Duchess of Marlborough" is meant only juniority in relation to her mother the old Duchess, who was still alive.

There is one evidence in Congreve, nevertheless, of the love of the highest aspirations, which has always puzzled us, and which, if it had not been for this bequest, would have forced us to give him credit for being superior, at heart, to his worldly tendencies. And indeed it is impossible to say, that such might not have been the case in his healthiest days, which are those in which the entire man is to be estimated. We allude to the power he had to write such verses as those on Lady Gethin, and such papers as the one he contributed to the Tatler, on the character of Lady Elizabeth Hastings,—an effusion so full of enthusiasm for the moral graces, and worded with an appearance of sincerity so cordial, that we can never read it without thinking it must have come from Steele. It is in this paper that he says one of the most elegant and truly loving things that were ever uttered by an unworldly passion:—"To *love* HER, is a *liberal education.*" Alas! why does the faith in good and beauty sometimes light up the human bosom, as if only to show that every heart has a corner capable of reflecting it for a moment, but not strong enough to retain it!—And yet, let us be glad that even the temporary capability is there. Time, and healthier institutions, and then custom and convention itself, will bring the rest.

Meantime the plays of Congreve will not help the advancement, except inasmuch as their narrow views contradict worse bigotries, and serve to neutralize both. His love is spare and sorry; his belief in nothing, abundant; the whole set but a mass of wit, and sarcasm, and fine writing;—of brilliant exposures of hollowness, and of plots so over-ingenious as to become perplexing and tiresome. Speaking for ourselves, indeed, we can never attend sufficiently to the plots of Congreve. They soon puzzle us, and we cease to think of them. We see nothing but a set of heartless fine ladies and gentlemen, coming in and out, saying witty things at each other, and buzzing in some maze of intrigue. Yet incessant activity is there; the first demand of life, movement, is supplied; and no human beings are as bad as they sometimes *flatter themselves they are*, or as the gay comic writer amuses his activity by supposing them.

But above all, we must confess we find the "wit" become tiresome. We love it heartily in its proper places, in Butler, Swift, and Addison, where it is serving some purpose greater than itself; and we love it still more, when it issues out of sheer animal spirits, and is happy as a child. But wit for wit's sake becomes a task and a trial; and in Congreve's days it was a cant, like the talk about "sense" and "reason;"—as if all sense, and reason, and wit, had been comprised in the substitution of the greater faculties of man for the less, and the critical for the unconscious. Everybody was to be "witty." Letters were to be full of "wit," and end in some "witty turn." Coffee-houses were to talk nothing but "wit." Ladies were to have "wit and sweetness," and gentlemen "wit and fire;" not the old "mother-wit" of Shakspeare and his fellows, which was a gift from the whole loving frame of Nature; but a trick of the fancy and of words, which you might almost acquire from the brother-wits of the tavern, and which dealt chiefly in simile, with a variation of antithesis. Every thing seemed to be of value, only inasmuch as it could be likened or opposed to something else; till at length simile and metaphor came to be taken for a "reason;" and "sense" itself was occupied, not in seeing into anything very deeply for its own

sake, but in discovering how far it was capable of being split off into a couple of images. The great wits, to be sure, bantered the less, and affected to laugh at the affectation; but it was only for the purpose of guarding its rank and distinctions. This cant of wit, which affected "manly Wycherley" himself a great deal more than it ought, came to its head in Congreve, and pretty well ceased with him. Vanbrugh was too robust and straight-forward to care for it, and Farquhar too full of play.

From the artificial nature of Congreve's plays, partly owing to this wrong direction of his ingenuity, and partly to the sophisticate excesses of his men and women, and the riddles of his plots, we have scarcely retained an impression of them sufficiently distinct from one another to enable us to do justice to each, though we have just read them through for the express purpose, and marked them, and made notes besides. The "Old Bachelor" was thought astonishing for its knowledge of life, from an author not out of his teens; but the critics have long discovered that there was no such "knowledge" in it as a youth so clever might not easily have attained. The wonderful thing was, the use he made of the knowledge, and the freedom from all appearance of immaturity. Dryden and Southerne, it is true, helped to fit it for the stage; but it is not likely that they made any great alteration in the main body and spirit of the thing, or the prevailing amount of its "sense." The characters of *Wittol*, *Bluffe*, and *Fondlewife*, are old stage property, as may be seen by their names; and the whole play, generally speaking, is but a wittier and less hearty re-fashionment of the style of Wycherley. Yet the reader, who has patience enough to watch the dialogue closely, will be rewarded with perpetual evidences of a quick observant mind, and of that conscious mastery over his pen and his sphere of action, which the new satirist of the circles appears to have felt the moment he entered them. The passage we call to mind with the greatest pleasure is the eighth scene of act the fourth, where Belinda sets her hair to rights, and describes the two girls from the country, whose dress she adjusted for them, and one of whom in gratitude gave her "two apples, piping hot, out of an under-petticoat pocket." *Pereant male qui ante nos*, &c. The "*fat* amber necklace" of the mother is a touch of genius.

The "Double Dealer," with the solemn reciprocities of *Lord* and *Lady Froth*, and the capital character of *Lady Plyant*, "insolent to her husband, and easy to every pretender," is far superior to the "Old Bachelor." Congreve excels in mixtures of impudence, hypocrisy, and self-delusion. The whole of the fifth scene of the second act, between *Lady Plyant* and *Mellefont*, is exquisite for the grossness of the overtures made under pretence of a delicacy in alarm. But it is no wonder a comedy did not succeed that has so black a villain in it as *Maskwell*, and an aunt who has a regularly installed gallant in her nephew. *Sir Paul Plyant* also says things to his daughter, which no decent person could hear with patience between father and child. The writer's object might have been a good one; but it is of doubtful and perilous use to attempt to do good by effrontery. It was on occasion of this play that Dryden addressed to Congreve his famous epistle, full of strength and good-nature, and almost as full of mistake. The dramatists of Charles the Second's age were described as superior in "skill" to the "giant race" their predecessors. Fletcher could "move,"

but had no power to "raise;" Ben Jonson doubled Fletcher's "force;" but all and everybody submitted to Congreve, except Shakspeare; and even he had but "as much" in him; for Nature "could not give him more!" But the panegyrics of this age, for want of that highest kind of truth on all sides, which only belongs to the highest genius, supplied defect of warmth with extravagance of attribution. There was generally a bargain in the matter: writers paid each other in kind, and lords paid dedicators in money. A natural excess of feeling on the part of the grateful, must be allowed to have had its share in the exaggeration. Flattery is not always insincere; and modesty itself may help to beguile gratitude into adulation, out of a doubt of its ability to render what is due.

"Love for Love" is the most amusing of all Congreve's plays, and the characters the least unpleasant. There are no revolting scoundrels; and the lovers really have some love. *Jeremy* is most improbably witty, for a servant; even though he once "waited on a gentleman at Cambridge." *Miss Prue* is not so naturally cunning as Wycherley's *Country Wife*, nor such a hearty bouncer as Vanbrugh's *Hoyden*; but she is a very good variety of that genus. The detection of one another by *Mrs. Frail* and *Mrs. Foresight*—

> "Where did you lose this gold bodkin? oh, sister, sister!"—
> "Well, if you come to that, where did you *find* this bodkin? oh, sister! sister every way!"

is ever fresh and retributive. Mr. Hazlitt has noticed the startling profundity of *Valentine's* request to his father, to disinherit him, not simply of the family estate, but of the passions and appetites which he begot in him. A less original, but like unconventional intimation, is noticeable in the claim put in by the servant, to be considered on a level in that respect with gentlemen:—

> "*Sir Sampson.* 'Oons, whose son are *you*? How were *you* engendered?
> *Jeremy.* I am, by my father, the son of a chairman; my mother sold oysters in winter, and cucumbers in summer; and I came up stairs into the world, for I was born in a cellar.
> *Foresight.* By your look you should go up stairs out of the world too, friend.
> *Sir Sampson.* And if this rogue were anatomised now, and dissected, he has vessels of digestion and concoction, and so forth, large enough for the inside of a cardinal, this son of a cucumber. These things are unaccountable and unreasonable."

"The character of *Foresight*," says Johnson, "was then common. Dryden calculated nativities; both Cromwell and King William had their lucky days; and Shaftesbury himself, though he had no religion, was said to regard prediction. The *Sailor* is not accounted very natural, but he is very pleasant." We know not why the *Sailor* should have been accounted unnatural, except that he appears to be a common sailor, and yet is the son of a man of fortune. It used to be said that sailors do not talk like sailors, nor use a sea-jargon; but they do. They talk, as other people do, within the limits of their experience. As to Shaftesbury, it is far from surprising that they who have no religion should yet be liable to superstition. They are often but the more at mercy of it, from the want of any set limits to belief. The demand for books of astrology is considerable at the present moment; and perhaps has never failed. Mankind cannot get rid of a sense of the unknown world, if it would; and

till it takes to it in the widest and most poetical sense, which is also the healthiest and most natural,—such as a child instinctively has when it looks at the stars,—it will dabble in the darkest borders of it, with a knowledge less than childish.

The "Mourning Bride" is not uninteresting in its story, nor so bad in its poetry as one might expect from the want of faith and passion natural to a town-wit of that age. Dr. Johnson, indeed, out of his amazing unacquaintance, or want of sympathy, (not to speak it irreverently) with poetry of the highest order, tells us, that if he were "required to select from the whole mass of English poetry the most poetical *paragraph*," (observe the instinct of that word!) "he knows not what he could prefer to an *exclamation* in the "Mourning Bride;" and then he quotes the passage in the third scene of act the second, where *Almeria* is so affected by the awful aspect of the interior of a cathedral. The passage indeed is a poetical one, and the best that Congreve wrote. The strong material presence of a cathedral-aisle, aided by the help of those thoughts of death which everybody experiences in looking at tombs, gave him a sufficient *knock on the head* to stir him to some emotion and attention, notwithstanding the neutralizing levity of his peruke. But a lover of the old poets will laugh as much at Johnson's unique notions of it, as the writer of the English ballad does at the irreparable loss which he supposes to be felt in Scotland at the death of a single hero:—

"I trust I have within my realm
Five hundred as good as he."

As the love of the "Mourning Bride," however, is defaced with the cant and sensuality of gallantry, so the style, for the most part, is poor, underbred (in a poetical sense), and instinctively prosaical; speaking neither with the richness nor the simplicity of passion, nor above the common-place of conventional metaphor. If the tragedy were revived now, the audience would laugh at the inflated sentences and unconscious prose. The revival of old English literature, and the tone of our best modern poets, have accustomed them to a higher and truer spirit. Yet some of the language of *Almeria*, as where, for instance, she again meets with *Osmyn*, is natural and affecting; and it is pleasing to catch a man of the world at these evidences of sympathy with what is serious. Nor are sensible and striking passages wanting. It is in this play, and the "Way of the World," that are to be found some of those rhyming, sententious couplets which have become proverbial, and which their quoters are often at a loss in what author to find.

"Heaven has no rage, like love to hatred turn'd,
Nor hell a fury, like a woman scorn'd."
Mourning Bride.—Close of Act III.

"For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds."
Idem.—Close of the Play.

"If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
The heart which others bleed for, bleed for me."
Way of the World.—Act III., Scene 12.

The "Way of the World," though not the most amusing, is assuredly the most complete, piquant, and observant of all the works of Congreve; full as an egg of

some kind of wit or sense in almost every sentence, and a rich treat for the lover of this sort of writing, sitting in his easy-chair. *Millamant* pushes the confident playfulness of a coquet to the verge of what is pleasing; but her animal spirits and good-nature secure her. You feel that her airs will give way, by-and-by, to a genuine tenderness; and, meanwhile, some of them are exquisite in their affected superiority to circumstances.

"*Mrs. Fainall.* You were dressed before I came abroad.

Millamant. Ay, that's true.—O, but then I had—*Mincing, what had I? Why was I so long?*

Mincing. O mem, your laship staid to peruse a pacquet of letters.

Millamant. O ay, *letters*—I had *letters*—I am persecuted with *letters*—I *hate* letters.—Nobody knows how to *write* letters; and yet one *has* 'em, one doesn't know why.—*They serve one to pin up one's hair.*"

And again:—

"Beauty the lover's gift! Lord, what is a lover, *that it can give?* Why, one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases, and then, if one pleases, *one makes more.*"

Mrs. Mincing, who pins hair up "so pure and *crips*," is the most *niminy-piminy* of attendants.—Act the fifth opens with one of Congreve's exquisite descriptions of common life:

"*Lady Wishfort.* Out of my house, out of my house, thou viper, thou serpent, that I have fostered; thou bosom traitress, that I raised from nothing.—Begone, begone, begone, go, go.—That I took from washing of old gauze and weaving of dead hair, with a black-blue nose over a chafing-dish of starved embers, and dining behind a traverse rag, in a shop no bigger than a bird-cage."

This is certainly the *genius loci*;—the poetry of local description, and narrow-minded contempt!

Very little poetry of any sort is there in the "Miscellanies" of Congreve, and not much of his accustomed wit. To his scholarship, as Dr. Johnson observed, the public were indebted for the discovery, that Cowley's irregular versification was not Pindaric; though, in a directly critical sense, he can hardly be said to have first taught the knowledge to "English writers;" for the example of the true Pindaric (as far as metre goes) had been set with pedantic nicety by Ben Jonson. Congreve professes not to be aware * of the existence of a precursor in this reformation; and most likely he had forgotten Ben's miscellaneous poetry, though he had well studied the dramas of the old scholar. He retained a better recollection of Spenser; for in the "Elegy on the Marquis of Blandford," (the son of his friend the Duchess of Marlborough,) the toiler through its common-places is agreeably surprised at coming upon one or two passages of real fancy and tenderness, evidently suggested by the verses of the great poet on the "Death of Sir Philip Sydney." All his other "Mourning Muses," and serious poems of any sort, with the exception of a passage in his ode upon the singing of Arabella Hunt, (for he had a real feeling for music,) are, for the most part, to use a frank epithet applied to some of them by Johnson, "despicable." He sometimes

* See the *Discourse on the Pindarique Ode* prefixed to one of Congreve's poems on King William; and, in Ben Jonson's works, the "Pindaric Ode" to the memory of Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison.

follows Cowley so ill, that he may be said to imitate Sprat!—as in the "sigh" which Silence occupies by way of "throne," and which has been "purposely *annihilated*" to oblige him with that accommodation! There is now and then a strenuous couplet in his translations, caught from the tone of Dryden. His art of "Pleasing" consists in a freedom from affectation; which though a necessary, is but a negative part of it. In his best songs he is remarkable for the absence of everything that is inverted in words, or superfluous to the thought; and here also his wit returns; but he implies, as usual, little cordiality in his gallantry. The following, however, is written in the spirit of a gentleman.

SONG.

False though she be to me and love,
  I'll ne'er pursue revenge;
For still the charmer I approve,
  Though I deplore the change.

In hours of bliss we oft have met,
  They could not always last;
And though the present I regret,
  I'm grateful for the past.

The following is more characteristic of his writings in ordinary; as full of wit, and what was thought "sense," as it is deficient in sentiment. It is needless to add, that epicures of this sort are ignorant of half of what they think they know best, the very luxury of the senses.

SONG.

Tell me no more I am deceived,
  That Chloe's false and common;
I always knew, at least believed,
  She was a very woman.
As such I liked, as such caress'd;
She still was constant when possess'd
  She could do more for no man.

But oh! her thoughts on others ran,
  And that you think a hard thing;
Perhaps she fancied you the man,
  And what care I one farthing?
You think she's false, I'm sure she's kind,
I take her body, you her mind;
  Which has the better bargain?

The perplexed heroine of the next has been thought to be "poor Mrs. Bracegirdle."

SONG.

Pious Selinda goes to prayers,
  If I but ask the favour;
And yet the tender fool's in tears,
  When she believes I'll leave her.

Would I were free from this restraint,
  Or else had hopes to win her!
Would she could make of me a saint,
  Or I of her a sinner!

Congreve had an admiration of fair saints; which indeed is natural to a sinner of his sort. But "Doris" was thought his master-piece. The critics of the age, with good-natured Steele at their head, wanted words to express their admiration of "Doris;"—Doris, which was the concatenation of everything new, and playful, and profound;—Doris, the "inimitable Doris," which, for aught that Greece or Rome had to show to the contrary, might have been written by Horace or Menander, or Virgil himself; nay, by Lord Dorset, or the Earl of Halifax. But we must not jest with a name like Steele, because we happen to live in an age which has been taught better. "Doris" is, in truth very acutely and pleasantly written, and, to this day, not a little startling; though the character was not a new one, even with Congreve. It shall be the last of our extracts in verse:—

DORIS.

Doris, a nymph of riper age,
  Has every grace and art
A wise observer to engage,
  Or wound a heedless heart.
Of native blush and rosy dye
  Time has her cheek bereft;
Which makes the prudent nymph supply,
  With paint, the injurious theft.
Her sparkling eyes she still retains,
  And teeth, in good repair;
And her well furnish'd front disdains
  To grace with borrow'd hair.
Of size, she is nor short nor tall,
  And does to fat incline
No more, than what the *French* would call
  Aimable embonpoint.
Farther her person to disclose
  I leave :—— let it suffice,
She has few faults, but what she knows,
  And can with skill disguise.
She many lovers has refused,
  With many more complied;
Which, like her clothes, when little used,
  She always lays aside.
She's one who looks with great contempt
  On each affected creature,
Whose nicety would seem exempt
  From appetites of nature.
She thinks they want or health or sense,
  Who want an inclination;
And therefore never takes offence
  At him who pleads his passion.
Whom she refuses, she treats still
  With so much sweet behaviour,
That her refusal, through her skill,
  Looks almost like a favour.

Since she this softness can express
  To those whom she rejects,
She must be very fond, you'll guess,
  Of such whom she affects.
But here our Doris far outgoes
  All that her sex have done;
She no regard for custom knows,
  Which reason bids her shun.
By reason, her own reason's meant,
  Or, if you please, her will;
For when this last is discontent,
  The first is served but ill.
Peculiar, therefore, is her way;
  Whether by nature taught,
I shall not undertake to say,
  Or by experience bought.
But who o'er night obtain'd her grace,
  She can next day disown;
And stare upon the strange man's face,
  As one she ne'er had known.
So well she can the truth disguise,
  Such artful wonder frame,
The lover or distrusts his eyes,
  Or thinks 'twas all a dream.
Some censure this as lewd and low,
  Who are to bounty blind;
For to forget what we bestow,
  Bespeaks a noble mind.
Doris our thanks nor asks nor needs,
  For all her favours done:
From her love flows, as light proceeds
  Spontaneous from the sun.
On one or other still her fires
  Display their genial force,
And she, like Sol, alone retires,
  To shine elsewhere of course.

Congreve's undramatic prose writings are few and of little importance. His answer to Collier is noticed at the conclusion of our lives. He addressed a letter to Dennis (whose name was dropped in the later editions of it,) on the subject of Humour in Comedy; but it contains nothing more remarkable than the use of the word *appearing* for *apparent*,—his only innovation we believe of the sort, and strange enough for a writer so opposed to pedantry. In the British Museum are some original letters of his, addressed to Mr. Porter, husband of the celebrated actress, and including one to herself. She was a neighbour of Mrs. Bracegirdle, and a very high-minded and good-natured woman, as well as an actress of great sensibility. We are not aware that these letters have ever been published, and having had permission to copy them, we lay them before the reader. They show us an unaffected man, and an easy, good-tempered, enjoying companion; and there is an occasional glimpse of his wit. We have

preserved the irregular initials and the want of stops, to show the progress that lesser wits have since made in these matters by the help of Mr. Dilworth.

"S[r] I am forced to Borrow Ladies paper* but I think it will contain all that I can tell you from this place which is so much out of the world that nothing but the last great news could have reacht it. I have a little tried what solitude and retirement can afford, which are here in pefection I am now writing to you from before a black mountain nodding over me and a whole river in cascade falling so near me that even I can distinctly see it. I can only tell you of the situation I am in, which would be better expressed by Mr. Grace if he were here. I hope all our friends are well both at salisbury and windsor where I suppose you spent the last week. pray whenever you write to 'em give my humble service. I think to go the next week to Mansfield race where I am told I shall see all the Country if I see any of y[r] acquaintance I will do you right to them. I hope Mrs Longuevilles picture has been well finished. I am Dear S[r] Y[r] most humble Servt. WILL. CONGREVE

"Ham near Ashbourn in Derbyshire

"Between 6 and 7 in the morning birds singing jolly breezes whistling &c."

(Outside.) "To Mr. Edward Porter At his house in Surrey Street i' the Strand, London."

"New Year Day.

"This is to wish you and Mrs. Porter and my friends in Howard-street† a happy new year, and next to condole with you for the damnd weather god knows when the snow will let me stir; or if a thaw should come upon it when the floods will be down. I am by a great fire yet my ink freezes so fast I cannot write. The Hautboys who playd to us last night had their breath froze in their instruments till it dropt of the ends of 'em in icicles by god this is true my service and sorrow to my friends for not being with 'em.

"I am y[r]: most obedient servant, W CONGREVE"

(Outside.) "For Mr. Porter, at his house in Surrey street, in the Strand London"

(Post-marks.) "Buckingham.—Frank, R. Temple."

The following is to Mrs. Porter:

"Rotterdam 7br 27: 1700

"I leave you to judge whether Holland can be said to be wanting in Gallantry, when it is Customary there to enclose a Billet doux to a Lady in a letter to her husband I have not so much as made mention of this, to yours; and if you tell first, let the sin fall upon your head instead of his. for my part I keep the Commandment, I love my neighbour as my selfe, and to avoid coveting my neighbour's wife I desire to be coveted by her; which you know is quite another thing. About —‡ weeks

* The "ladies' paper" seems to be paper to curl the hair. It is a half-sheet doubled.

† Mrs. Bracegirdle, and probably her mother.

‡ We cannot make out this hieroglyphic.

since, I wrote a very passionate letter to you from Antwerp which I believe you never received, for just now it is found carefully put up by my man, who has been drunk ever since. I understand you have not been in the Country, I am glad of it; for I should very much have apprehended the effect which solitude might have produced, Joined with the regrett which I know you feel for my absence. take it for granted that I sigh extreamly: I would have written by the Alcayd, but that would make me reflect that I was at a distance from her, which is pain I cannot bear. I would have written to your mother but that I have changed my religion twice since I left england, I am at present so unsettled, that I think it fit to fix before I endeavour to convert her to my opinion which I design to do as soon as I know what it is. I have discoursed with friars and monks of all orders, with zealots, enthusiasts and all sectaries of the reformed churches. and I had the benefit to travel 12 leagues together in Guelderland with a mad Phanatick in a waggon, who preached to me all the way things not to be written. Pray take care that Mr. Ebbub has good wine, for I have much to say to you over a bottle under-ground: and I hope within 3 weeks to satisfie you that no man upon the face of the earth is more dear neighbour

"your ffaithfull and affectionate humble servant W : C"

(*Outside.*) "For Mrs. Porter."

"*Calais : Aug :* 11*th : Old : S :* 1700

"If any letters are left for me before you receive this pray enclose 'em to be left at the post house in Brussels: for any that shall come after yr. receipt of this, I will trouble you with some other direction

"Here is Admirable Champagn for twelvepence a quart as good Burgundy for 15 pence; and yet I have virtue enough to resolve to leave this place to-morrow for St. Omers where the same wine is halfe as dear again and may be not quite so good. (dear Neighbour) Charles and Jacob* and I have never failed drinking yr. healths since we saw you, nor ever will till we see you again. we had a long passage but delicate weather. we set sail from Dover on satturday morning 4 a clock and did not land here till 6 the same evening; nor had we arrived even in that time, if a french open boat with oars had not been stragling towards us when we were not quite halfe-seas over, and rowd us hither from thence in † hours; for the packet-boat came not till this morning; when I come to Brussels I shall have more to write to you till then I am most humbly and heartily yrs. W: Congreve.

"My humble service to my neighbour, your mother, Mrs: Anne‡, Mrs: Travers, not forgetting the Alcayde, who I hope in my absence may be reconciled to Punch.

"Poor Charles is just writing to Mrs. Anne and striving very hard to find something besides the Ballad, to please her much.

(*Outside.*) "To Mr. Porter, at his house in Arundel Street, against the blew-ball, London."

* Probably Jacob Tonson. † We cannot make out the number. ‡ Bracegirdle.

"*Aug*: 9*th*:

"I am very sorry to hear you are indisposed; tho I believe the season is a great part of y^r^ distemper. I assure you it still keeps me back and I have frequently vapours to that excesse, that if I had not some free intervals, I should think my selfe rather impaird than improved in my health. I dont tell you this by way of Complaint so much as by way of Consolation for if good air, moderate exercise, temperate living perfect ease and plenty—cannot resist the influence of this miserable season; you may imagine what power it must necessarily have over you in town, upon the remainder of your last years disorder. your Cough is that I am most concerned for because it is most troublesome to you tho I make no doubt of that being also vapourish or hysterick. I am only glad you have Dr. Robinson who I make no question will set you quite right. pray let me hear soon that you are better. You must assure y^r^ selfe any way no matter how. I am just now as hot as the Devil in my hands and it is but between six and seven in the morning and promises to be a fine day. but I can never be again imposed on by the dissimulation of the weather. we live here like good middling sort of friars in a pretty retirement onely we have no Nuns. I fancy a good friar would do you no more harm than a good nun would do me or as Dr. R or Dr. Dunny. I should take it for a prodigious favour if you would let me hear from you and be overjoyed to have you tell me you were better. if I could send you anything that could do you as much good as such a letter would do me; you should have very little cause, and very little time longer to complain."

(*In the same letter.*)

"S^r^—if you see Mr Curtis to night pray know of him if it be possible for me to have a picture of Ld Rochester which was Mrs. Barrys. I think it is a head. I think it is not as a painting any very great matter. however I have a very particular reason why I would have it at any reasonable rate, at least the refusal of it. if this can be don. he will very much oblige his and y^r^. very humble servant

"fryday even: "Wm Congreve"

(*Outside.*) "To Mr Porter."

Mrs. Porter had been the pupil of Mrs. Barry, who was at one time mistress to Lord Rochester.

VANBRUGH.

THE *father-land*, birth-place, and very name of VANBRUGH, have been involved in doubts, not uninteresting where men of eminence are concerned. The stock has been derived, not only from the Netherlands, but from Cheshire, and from France. He is generally said to have been born in the parish of St. Stephen's, Walbrook; but Mr. Disraeli would seem to have discovered, that it was in Paris, in the *Bastile!* And Lysons, and others, spell him, not Vanbrugh, but *Vanburgh*.

The report of the family's having originated in France, seems to have been owing to nothing more than the popular error which used to take every foreigner for a Frenchman. The Cheshire descent may be disposed of by the circumstance of his father's having once resided at Chester. The birth in the Bastile depends upon whether we are to take the word literally or metaphorically, and that the prevailing mode of spelling the name is the right one, is obvious from the crest of the family coat-of-arms, which is a demi-lion issuing from a *bridge*, with its arches reversed; —a symbol, corroborating the Flemish origin, and most likely recording some achievement of the ancestor on whom it was conferred*. The Low Countries are full of bridges; and as warriors and architects alike have had to do with them at periods of invasion, perhaps it was some military, perhaps some civil exploit, which obtained for the ancestral Vanbrugh this record of the ruined bridge; and a love of architecture may thus have become hereditary in the race.

The account, and apparently the only account, which Vanbrugh himself gave of his family, when he applied for a confirmation of this coat-of-arms to the Heralds' College, was, that before the persecution of the protestants by the Duke of Alva, it lived near Ghent in Flanders. We may, therefore, safely follow the biographers in bringing it over to England on that occasion, in the person of his grandfather, Giles Vanbrugh, who settled as a merchant in the parish of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, where he died in the year 1646. His son, another Giles Vanbrugh, is reported to have settled in Chester, as a sugar-baker, and to have acquired such a fortune as appears to have lifted him into the ranks of gentry, since he is styled *esquire* by a herald of that day, when the title had not become the common property which it now is; and it is added, that removing to London, he obtained the place of comptroller of the Treasury-Chamber. This Giles, who died in 1715, three years after his wife, (so that they both lived to see the eminence of their son,) married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Dudley Carleton, of Imbercourt in Surrey, nephew of the celebrated statesman of that name, afterwards Lord Dorchester, who, together with his nephew, was so mixed up with the diplomatic relations of England and Holland; and of the eight sons of this marriage,

* See Noble's *History of the College of Arms*, 4to, 1804, p. 355.

our author, John, was the second *. The date of his birth is not ascertained, but is supposed to have been in the year 1666, the *Annus Mirabilis* of Dryden. It is pleasant to think, that if the necessity of the progress of things demanded that this year should be memorable for purifications by fire and sword, it should also be secretly producing the enjoyments of peace, and the better helps of the good-nature of comic writers. For Nature, who made laughter, is no ascetic; nor wills that the rough surgeries of pain should be as lasting as the health of pleasure.

The passage in Vanbrugh's writings, in which Mr. Disraeli appears to have discovered his birthplace, is one in which, alluding to a chance of being thrown into prison, he says, that he should thus finish his days in an English bastile, as he "began them *in a French one*†." This, if taken literally, is decisive. On the other hand, the doubt of Mr. Allan Cunningham is worthy of notice,—that Vanbrugh may have spoken, not in a literal sense, but with reference to a story reported by his biographers, which says that he once got shut up in the Bastile, for being caught taking a sketch of it; and that he owed his deliverance to an impression which he made on some influential people by amusing himself with rude sketches of comedies ‡. This story is not improbable, as it is consistent throughout with his two-fold genius of writer and architect, and with another profession to be spoken of presently, as well as with the fact of his having been, at all events, some years in France. He might thus have meant, by beginning his days in the Bastile, that he began, so to speak, his public days,—or, in a high and stirring sense, to live;—the days of his "manhood," as Mr. Cunningham says; or simply, that he was its tenant, as the same writer observes, "early in life." And yet the burden of disproof lies on the side of those who object to the plain and literal meaning of any given words; nor can it be held at all improbable, that Vanbrugh was actually born in the French prison. The year 1666, among its other marvels, beheld a sudden declaration of war against the restored monarchy of England, by its friend Louis the Fourteenth, originating in the views of the latter upon the Low Countries; and as the Carleton family were great political agents in those questions, it is not at all unlikely that the future comptroller of the Treasury-Chamber, father of our author, and husband of a Carleton, had some delicate business to transact in Paris, which suddenly got him clapped into "durance vile." It is well known that ladies as well as gentlemen were locked up in that most ungallant fortress of our gallant neighbours, sometimes for taking a part themselves in these higher niceties of intrigue §.

Had Vanbrugh's father a turn for architecture before him? or for writing comedies? or both? agreeably to what is so often seen of the appearance of those germs of ability in parents, which come to a head and reputation in the offspring. Mr. Disraeli's pro-

* A brother of Giles's (William) married another daughter of Sir Dudley. See Burke's *Landed Gentry*, article CARLETON; where he is styled "William *Vamburg*, of London, merchant." Giles is entitled "Squire."

† *Curiosities of Literature*, ed. 1839, p. 413.

‡ *Lives of the most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, vol. iv. p. 256.

§ See an autobiography delightful for its candour, the *Memoirs of Madame de Staal*; who was involved in the political schemes of the Duchess du Maine, in the time of the Regency.

duction of the passage in question has, at all events, served to throw fresh mystery over the Bastile transaction, whatever it was, in our author's life, and to mix up anew the father's history with the son's.

Of the education of Vanbrugh we are told nothing, except that it was liberal, and that during his teens, like Wycherley, he was sent to France; probably to complete it; perhaps to study architecture, or soldiership; very likely both; (no unusual, nor unprofitable mixing up of studies in those days;) for on his return to England, he entered the army as an ensign. He may have studied engineering, in order to include military architecture. It is more clear, that going to France at the age of nineteen, and remaining there some years, the animal spirits of the young dramatist must have received no small encouragement to that freedom of speech and morals, which afterwards ran, like so much claret and burgundy, through his comic vein.

Where, or when indeed, he accomplished himself for his profession of architect, still remains among the obscurities of his biography; nor is it known how long he continued in the army. He appears, a good while afterwards, to have been styled "Captain," about town; but in the year 1695, when he is supposed to have been twenty-nine, we find him, as "Mr. Vanbrugh," appointed secretary to the commission for endowing Greenwich Hospital, on the nomination of the celebrated John Evelyn; and two years afterwards, or less (for the confused state of the calendar at that time renders it difficult to distinguish between year and year), his first play, the "Relapse," was brought out at Drury Lane.

This comedy, however, had been sketched some time before. The tradition is, that he had drawn the outlines both of the "Relapse" and the "Provoked Wife," while in the army (the latter first); and that having, during winter-quarters somewhere, become acquainted with Sir Thomas Skipwith, who had done him a pecuniary service and was one of the sharers in Drury Lane theatre, Sir Thomas encouraged him to complete the "Relapse" for his stage; upon which Vanbrugh had the good fortune to repay his friend's kindness by a success which the theatre stood much in need of. With profits to the house, reputation flowed in upon our author. His friend, who appears to have been rich, and not exclusively anxious for his own stage, would not balk the new dramatist of the patronage of the Mæcenas of the day, Montague, afterwards Lord Halifax, then on the eve of his greatest honours; but bespeaking his third venture for Drury Lane, suffered him at Montague's desire to complete the "Provoked Wife" for the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, at which it came out the following year, and maintained the promise of the "Relapse." The venture for Drury Lane, which was produced the same year, was "Æsop," a moral lecture from the French of Boursault; which though it had some sprightly additions from the pen of the adapter, (the whole of part second,) must have astonished the gay audiences of the two first pieces, and did not meet with the success that might have been wished for generous Sir Thomas. It was hoped, no doubt, that credit would be given to the author for having the inclination and the power to instruct as well as to amuse,—to be grave as well as to be gay; but prose comic writers seldom appear in earnest enough at any time, to be able to make this demand upon the belief of their hearers with safety. There will be thought

to be some trick in it, as there is; and there are more reasons why the piece did not succeed at the time, which will be mentioned when we come to speak of the plays critically.

In 1700, at the same theatre, Fletcher's comedy of the "Pilgrim" was adapted to the taste of the times by our author, and its third night's benefit given either to Dryden or his son Charles, upon condition of his furnishing those aids of "Prologue" and "Epilogue," &c. which appear in his poems. Dryden was then dying, in the full blaze of his powers; for he, to whom nobody's prologues and epilogues, before or since, ever came near, never wrote two finer ones than he did on this occasion,—more full of easy mastery and felicitous application; and the lyrics which accompanied them (the "Secular Masque," &c.) were so brilliant with his old dashing music, that John Buncle, in the full roar of his animal spirits, could find nothing of more potential joviality, wherewith to give vent to the plenitude of his satisfaction at having had a good dinner. But we were going to say, that though it is not known whether Dryden hailed the genius of Vanbrugh as he did that of Congreve, it is always pleasant to find these links of intimacy between celebrated men.

The "False Friend," a Spanish love-plot, upon an old and obvious subject, is only worth recording for its having been brought out in the year 1702. Almost all that deserves noting in it, may be here set down in a dozen lines; but the passage is of the right Vanbrugh sort, and full of an off-hand and pleasant assurance:—

"*Don John.* Well, old acquaintance, you are going to be married then? 'Tis resolved, ha!
Don Pedro. So says my star.
Don John. The foolishest star that has said anything a great while.
Don Pedro. Still the same, I see! or, more than ever, resolved to love nothing.
Don John. Love nothing! why, I'm in love at this very time.
Don Pedro. With what?
Don John. A woman!
Don Pedro. Impossible!
Don John. True.
Don Pedro. And how came you in love with her?
Don John. Why, I was ordered not to be in love with her."

In the same year, 1702, Vanbrugh made, we believe, his first architectural design of celebrity, that of Castle Howard in Yorkshire, the seat of Charles, third Earl of Carlisle; who was so pleased with it, that being deputy Earl-marshal during the minority of the Duke of Norfolk, and having nothing more appropriate, we suppose, to give him, he presented him with the tabard of Clarencieux, king-at-arms. The appointment greatly offended his new brethren, the heralds, for two reasons; first, because he knew nothing of heraldry; which argued, they thought, a strange moral laxity on the part of the deputy marshal; and second, because with a reprobacy that rendered the ignorance unpardonable, he laughed at it! Swift, who disliked Vanbrugh, because he girded at the cloth, and was of the Whig party, said that he might now indeed pretend to "build *houses*." Vanbrugh laughed at heraldry; yet we have seen him apply to the college he ridiculed, for the confirmation of a coat-of-arms. Men would fain be above their fellow-creatures on the side of intellect, yet are always restoring the equilibrium on that of vanity and the passions;—let us add, on that of

the social affections also; for every conventional tendency, however sophisticate, has a ground in it of the love of others; and it is well that it should be so. Charity is secretly ensured by it, as society proceeds; and it will ultimately secure the improvements, that receive gradual assent.

Vanbrugh's double success as author and architect, having now, with the help of his agreeable qualities as a man, rendered him popular with all classes, he thought he might at once enrich himself, and help to restore the interests of an old company of actors then declining, by erecting a theatre of nobler dimensions, and getting Congreve to aid him in the production of plays which Betterton was to get performed. He accordingly had interest enough with thirty persons of quality, to procure subscriptions from them for the purpose at a hundred pounds each; and the first stone of the theatre was laid on the site of the present opera-house, and inscribed with the words "Little Whig," in honour of the reigning toast of the party, the Countess of Sunderland, one of the daughters of Marlborough; whose fair hand, we presume, was the first to tap it with the approval of the silver trowel. But the architect, seduced by the opportunity of showing the metropolis the grandeur of his ideas, either forgot the purpose for which his building was erected, or made some venturous miscalculation in his acoustics; for its huge sides and sound-sustaining roofs turned out to be fitter for song than dialogue; the actors, according to Cibber, were heard gabbling below, as in the aisles of a cathedral, with hollow reverberations; and as the present west end of the town was at that time more than half made up of fields and meadows, and the frequenters of pit and gallery had to come from such a distance as made coach-hire expensive, the project died, like the poor actors' voices, in its own magnificence. In vain the two wits and joint-proprietors strained their united faculties. In vain, as if by ominous anticipation, they opened their theatre with a sort of compromise between Italian and English, a translated opera with Italian music. In vain our author followed it with one of the liveliest of his productions, the "Confederacy." In vain the more prudent Congreve backed out of the dying concern, and left his colleague to try an infusion of the spirit of Molière, three of whose liveliest plays, in the same season, he translated and put on the boards, the "Cocu Imaginaire" (Cuckold in Conceit); "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac," as "Squire Trelooby;" and the "Dépit Amoureux," as the "Mistake." Vanbrugh was himself forced to give up a speculation which, except on a small scale, and then only with aid from wits of another sort, appears never to have succeeded in the hands of authors. We know not on what occasion, years afterwards, he was induced to translate a farce from the French of D'Ancourt, not worth the trouble,—the "Country House." The "Journey to London" was left unfinished at his death; and here then, as the rest of his life seems to have been devoted to architecture, we may anticipate the chronological termination of his writings. He reversed the fate experienced by Ariosto. The Italian, being reminded of the smallness of the abode he had built for himself, compared with the magnificence of the palaces in his fiction, said he found it easier to build houses with words than with stone. Vanbrugh found stone more *edifying* than words; and he lost no time in repairing his fortunes accordingly.

Every help was instantly afforded him. No sooner does he appear to have concluded his theatrical struggles, than Queen Anne, in the year 1706, commissioned him to carry the habit and ensigns of the Order of the Garter to the Elector of Hanover; and in the same year, he built a house for himself at Whitehall, and was occupied in raising the great structure of Blenheim. We know not the dates of his various architectural works, nor are they necessary to the volume before us. But we must not omit the great trouble of his life, the dispute he got into with the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough respecting the Blenheim payments. It appears that Parliament, by no very generous oversight, had voted the building of the mansion, without taking care of any supplies for it. The Queen paid them while she lived; the Duke, who loved money, occasionally doled out a little afterwards, always protesting that he had nothing to do with the matter; the Duchess, after her lord's decease, tried to make Vanbrugh himself responsible; and the poor architect, thus driven from pillar to post, out of pocket, ashamed, alarmed, and finally exasperated, had a violent quarrel with that insolent woman, who ended with taking the work out of his hands, and refusing himself and his wife even a sight of it when finished, though finished after his own design. Vanbrugh had gone thither on purpose, with a party of friends from Castle-Howard; which must have aggravated the mortification.

"We staid," says he, "two nights in Woodstock; but there was an order to the servants, under her grace's own hand, not to let me enter Blenheim; and lest that should not mortify me enough, she having somehow learned that my wife was of the company, sent an express the night before we came there, with orders that if *she* came with the Castle-Howard ladies, the servants should not suffer her to see either house, garden, or even to enter the park; so she was forced to sit all day long, and keep me company at the inn*."

There was a voluminous correspondence on the subject between the duchess and Vanbrugh, and notices of it, highly characteristic of him, in letters to his friend Tonson, the bookseller. The following dramatic touches are selected from portions of them in Disraeli:—

"I have the misfortune of losing, for I now see little hopes of ever getting it, near 2000*l*., due to me for many years' service, plague, and trouble, at Blenheim, which *that wicked woman* of Marlborough is so far from paying me, that the duke being sued by some of the workmen for work done there, she has tried to turn the debt due to them upon me, *for which I think she ought to be hanged*."

And again, after the duke's death,—

"He has given his widow (*may a Scottish ensign get her*) 10,000*l*. a-year to spoil Blenheim her own way; 12,000*l*. to keep herself clean, and go to law," &c.

And the following "explosion," as Disraeli calls it; in which is to be found the passage that is supposed to have determined his birth-place:—

* See the article entitled "Secret History of the Building of Blenheim," written by Mr. Disraeli with his usual spirit, in the *Curiosities of Literature*, *ut supra*, p. 413.

"I have been forced into Chancery by *that B. B. B.* the duchess of Marlborough, where she has got an injunction upon me by her friend the late good chancellor (earl of Macclesfield)*, who declared that I never was employed by the duke, and therefore had no demand upon his estate for my services at Blenheim. Since my hands were thus tied up from trying by law to recover my arrears, I have prevailed with Sir Robert Walpole to help me *in a scheme* which I proposed to him, by which I got my money *in spite of the hussy's teeth.* My carrying this point enrages her much, and the more because it is of considerable weight in my small fortune, which she has heartily endeavoured so to destroy as to throw me into an English Bastile, there to finish my days, *as I began them, in a French one.*"

What the formidable array of B's may portend, at the beginning of this extract, might perhaps be not uncandidly guessed at by the philosophic reader, from parallel passages in the remarks of Shakspeare on heaths, and Dr. Johnson on witches,—aided by a serene illustration from the colloquies of Bishop Burnet; of whose absence of mind Walpole has the following anecdote, in connexion with this very duchess. Dining with her one day after the duke's disgrace, his lordship was comparing him to Belisarius. "But how," said she, "could so great a general (as Belisarius) be so abandoned?" "Oh, madam," said the bishop, "do not you know what a brimstone of a wife he had?"†

Besides Blenheim and Castle-Howard, Vanbrugh built Oulton-Hall in Cheshire, Easton-Neston in Northamptonshire, Seaton-Delaval in Northumberland, &c. &c., and doubtless a great variety of mansions, large and small, which must have brought him a considerable quantity of money; but he was probably no stinted liver. In 1714 he was knighted by the new sovereign, George the First, to whom he had taken the Garter when Elector. He was appointed comptroller of the royal works next year, and surveyor of the works at Greenwich Hospital the year after; and on the death of the then Garter King-at-Arms, he was nominated to succeed him; but Anstis claimed the office on the strength of a promise from Queen Anne, and after long efforts obtained it. The wife mentioned in the extract from his Letters, was Henrietta Maria, daughter of Colonel Yarborough of Haslington, near York, whom, from a passage in the Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, we conjecture him to have married towards the close of the year 1710. He was then five-and-forty, and the lady perhaps ten or fifteen years younger—some say twenty. Lady Mary, in the insolence of eighteen, calls her a "ruin." The following is the passage in her Letters alluded to:—

"I can't forbear entertaining you with our York lovers (strange monsters, you'll think, love being as much forced up here as melons). In the first form of these creatures is even Mr. Vanbrugh. Heaven, no doubt, compassionating our dulness, has inspired him with a passion that makes us all ready to die with laughing: 'tis credibly reported that he is endeavouring at the honourable state of matrimony, and

* Impeached and found guilty of corruption in 1725, for selling the post of Master in Chancery.

† Walpole's *Reminiscences*, 1819, p. 75.

vows to lead a single life no more. Whether pure holiness inspires his mind, or dotage turns his brain, is hard to find. 'Tis certain he keeps Monday and Thursday market (*assembly*-day) constantly; and for those that don't regard worldly muck, there's extraordinary good choice indeed. I believe last Monday there were two hundred pieces of women's flesh (fat and lean): but you know Van's taste was always odd: his inclination to ruins has given him a fancy for Mrs. Yarborough: he sighs and ogles so, that it would do your heart good to see him; and she is not a little pleased, in so small a proportion of men amongst such a number of women, that a whole man should fall to her share.—My dear, adieu. My service to Mr. Congreve.

"M. P." (Mary Pierrepont.)*

This delicate epistle, written in her ladyship's maiden state and twentieth year, was addressed to the sister of her lover and future husband, Mr. Wortley Montagu; but Mr. Wortley Montagu was a "bold man," and he suffered for his bravery. Our author's marriage, on the other hand, is said to have been a happy one; and by the various dwellings he possessed, he must have passed the remainder of his life in a state of affluence. Besides his house in town, he built two at Greenwich, on a spot since called Vanbrugh Fields. He appears, at one time, to have been living in Berkshire, near the residence of his old friend Tonson †, for whom he had a great regard. In Rowe's parody upon the dialogue between *Horace* and *Lydia*, the warm-hearted bookseller (for such he seems to have been, in spite of occasional irritabilities between him and his authors) is thus represented as speaking of Vanbrugh:—

"I'm in with Captain Vanbrugh at the present,
A most sweet-natured gentleman, and pleasant;
He writes your comedies, draws schemes, and models,
And builds dukes' houses upon very odd hills;
For him, so much I dote on him, that I
(If I was sure to go to heaven) would die."

It is more than probable, from the masterly nature of the piece which he left unfinished, and which promised to be his best, that Vanbrugh had resumed his stage enjoyments, and was still "writing your comedies," when he died in his sixtieth year, at his house in Scotland Yard, March 26, 1726. His disorder was a quinsey. He was interred in the family vault at St. Stephen's, Walbrook. Lady Vanbrugh survived him for the space of forty years, not dying till April 1776. The biographies vary about the number of their children. One says they had three; another an only son. Two, however, appear to have died in infancy. The son became an ensign in the Guards, and died of the wounds he received at the battle of Fontenoy.

Vanbrugh had a character in society, such as might be expected from the account given of him by Rowe. "Garth, Vanbrugh, and Congreve" (says Spence, on the authorities of Tonson and Pope), "were the three most honest-hearted, real good men,

* *Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montague.* 1837. vol. i. p. 155.
† Noble's *History of the College of Arms*, ut supra; and Lysons's *Berkshire*.

of the poetical members of the Kit-kat Club." He was a Whig, whose sincerity and good-nature enabled him to survive party animosity. Swift and Pope, when they published their Miscellanies, openly regretted their raillery against "a man of wit and of honour." He jested upon heraldry when he entered the heralds' office, probably thinking his colleagues would jest too; and his only resentment on record is that against the duchess of Marlborough, who was such a woman as his very love of the sex might have made him disgusted with. But he seems to have been happily constituted in mind and body. He had a "fine, elegant, manly person," says Noble; and the best engraved portraits of him, after Kneller, give him a face to match it.

Vanbrugh stands alone in the history of letters for combining the apparently incompatible geniuses of comic writer and architect. Yet surely they are not so, for a secret reason and proportion is at the bottom of all works of art; and while the men of letters, not unjealously perhaps, laughed at his architecture, the public felt a grandeur in it; and an artist (Sir Joshua Reynolds) thought that it benefited by the aid of the writer's fancy, and possessed a pictorial and daring originality. The passage in his Lectures, in which the architect is vindicated, is so well felt and written, that we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of repeating it.

"In the buildings of Vanbrugh, who was a poet as well as an architect, there is a greater display of imagination," he says, "than we shall find perhaps, in any other; and this is the ground of the effect we feel in many of his works, notwithstanding the faults with which many of them are charged. For this purpose, Vanbrugh appears to have had recourse to some principles of the Gothic architecture, which, though not so ancient as the Grecian, is more so to our imagination, with which the artist is more concerned than with absolute truth." To speak of him, "in the language of a painter, he had originality of invention; he understood light and shadow, and had great skill in composition. To support his principal object, he produced his second and third groups, or masses. He perfectly understood in his art, what is the most difficult in ours, the conduct of the back-ground, by which the design and invention are set off to the greatest advantage. What the back-ground is in painting, in architecture is the real ground on which the building is erected; and no architect took greater care that his work should not appear crude and hard, that is, that it did not abruptly start out of the ground without expectation or preparation. This is a tribute which a painter owes to an architect who composed like a painter, and was defrauded of the due reward of his merit by the wits of the time, who did not understand the principles of composition better than he, and who knew little or nothing of what he understood perfectly, the general ruling principles of architecture and painting. Vanbrugh's fate was that of the great Perrault. Both were the objects of the petulant sarcasms of factious men, and both have left some of the fairest monuments, which to this day decorate their several countries; the *façade* of the Louvre; Blenheim, and Castle Howard.

We have ourselves never seen any of the great architectural works of Vanbrugh; to say nothing of our inability to pronounce judgment, if we had. But in common with others, we may state the impression which has been made upon us by pictures of them in books, and which is that of a bold and liberal will, desiring to produce a

princely effect, and doing it *. On the other hand, we cannot help thinking, that in minor buildings, such as that, for instance, of the church of St. John's, Westminster, (which we *have* seen,) he is simply heavy and Dutch; and in his least of all, or the whims of his fancy, we suspect that Swift's jests about "mouse-traps" and "goose-pies" were hardly unwarranted. Swift describes people looking about Whitehall, to know where Vanbrugh's house was to be found, and making inquiries of the "watermen" and the "Thames,"

"At length they in the rubbish spy
A thing resembling a goose-pie."

Now Vanbrugh built another trifle of this sort at Greenwich, which was called, perhaps by himself, the "mince-pie house;" and another again at the same place, which he dubbed by the undomestic title of "The Bastile," probably in commemoration of the event in his life, whatever it was, which kept the original in his mind. But these whims and their christenings indicate a taste of no very good sort, on the lighter side; nothing like the magnificent will that "upheaved" Blenheim. Perhaps, by an indulgence of the same will, however, in its unbendings, the comic writer was himself jesting in these instances with brick and mortar, not very happily. As to Walpole, who ridiculed his grander efforts, Walpole really had a solid judgment in most things, hardly to be expected from his effeminate temperament; but the latter predominated in his own Gothic toys of wood; and one fancies Vanbrugh, if he had had a mind to build on Strawberry Hill, putting his manly leg upon Horace's little pinnacles, and crushing them as he might have done a house in a toy-shop. There was a heavier though smaller wit in Vanbrugh's days, one Dr. Evans, who in echoing the jokes of the greater ones, had the luck to hit upon a couplet which has survived all his other writings and his very name, and even had the good fortune, in its way down to posterity, of dropping a superfluous fellow couplet; for the whole jest was originally in four lines, and stood thus:—

"Under this stone, reader, survey
Dead Sir John Vanbrugh's house of clay:
Lie heavy on him, earth! for he
Laid many heavy loads on thee!" †

After all, as there is undoubtedly a national as well as family blood in a stock, and the portraits of ancestors who lived centuries ago startle those who see the faces of their posterity, Vanbrugh may have derived the heavy portion of his architecture from the Flemish bridge-masters of his house, while to the daughter of the English diplomatist, assisted by a French education, may be owing the plot and gaiety of his drama.

* In Palace Green, Kensington, is a small but curious structure, originally intended to supply the palace with water, and strongly exemplifying what may be called the *no nonsense* style of Vanbrugh; the ends of which were use, durability, and energetic appearance.

† For divers *immemorabilia* of Doctor Evans, the curious lover of books may consult Nichols's *Collection of Poems*, vol. iii. and iv.; and Dodsley's, vol. i. p. 158. He was not destitute of humour; but it was rare in quantity, rather than quality. Gray, in a letter to Walpole, says of him, in reference to his poem in *Dodsley*, "Dr. Evans is a furious madman; and 'Pre-existence' is nonsense in all its altitudes."

"There are more things, *even in a turn for jesting*,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

His character as a comic writer, is clear and obvious. It is straightforward, cheerful, confident, and robust; something between Flemish and French; not over-nice in its decorums, not giving too much credit to conventional virtues, nor yet disbelieving in the virtues that will always remain such, and that are healthy and hearty; but as his jovial and sincere temperament gave him a thorough dislike of hypocrisy, the licence of the times allowed him to be plain-spoken to an extent which was perilous to his animal spirits; and an editor in these days is startled, not to say frightened, at sallies of audacity and exposure, which, however loath to call effrontery, he is forced to think such, and is only prevented by belief in the goodness of his heart from concluding to be want of feeling. Of feeling indeed, in the sentimental sense, Vanbrugh shows little or none. He seems to have thought it foreign to the satire and mirth of comedy. His plots are interesting, without having the teasing perplexity of Congreve's; and he is more uniformly strong than Farquhar, and cheerful than Wycherley. What he borrows, he seems to change at one blow into something better, by sleight, or rather, force of hand. He is easy in invention, and true and various in character. His style is so natural and straightforward, that Cibber says the actors preferred it to every other, it was so easy to learn by rote. What he wants (except at the bottom of his heart) is every species of refinement, but that of a freedom from all cant and nonsense! He has no more poetry in him, in a sense apart from what is common to everything artistic, than a sailor who would see nothing in Shakspeare's "Bermoothes," except the turtle. But in a superiority to circumstances sophisticate, the best-bred of gallants could not beat him, whether from absence of veneration, or presence of good health. His *Lord Foppington* is the quintessence of nullification, and of the scorn of things which he does not care for; while *Miss Hoyden*, without delay or "mistake," is for consolidating everything into the tangible and plenitudinous, for which she does care. In short, if Vanbrugh's father had had wit and perception enough in him to give him a right, he might have said to him, as *Sir Anthony Absolute* said to the Captain, his son, when he vented the height of his astonished and fatherly satisfaction at his having been a better love-maker than he took him for,—"Jack, you certainly are an impudent dog."

It was complained of, with regard to Vanbrugh's first comedy the "Relapse," that he had taken the penitent of Cibber's play ("Love's Last Shift"), and made him fall into his old ways again; which hurt the moral. But Vanbrugh laughed at the morals of Cibber. He knew that so flimsy and canting a teacher could only teach pretences; and in undoing his work he left society to find out something better. On the other hand, when Cibber took up the author's unfinished play, the "Journey to London," and fancied that he had improved it with his *Lord Townly* and *Lady Grace*, and his insipid perfect gentleman, *Mr. Manly*, he made a blunder of such dull vanity and time-serving self-love, as it is melancholy to think of in the sprightly Colley, but much more to read, after reading Vanbrugh's three acts! It is worth the reader's

while to refer to Cibber's play, and compare them. What a poor, pick-thank set of common-place usurpers of attention,—of pretenders to a "clear stage and no favour,"—after the heartier moral fair-play of Vanbrugh! What a half-sided lesson, taking it at its best, and a servile playing into the hands of the stronger sex, as if nothing could be more exemplary or further-sighted! The very name of Lord "Loverule" instead of "Townly," shows that the "reciprocity" was not to be all on one side in Vanbrugh's play. But everything is miserably washed down in Cibber, even to poor John Moody and the footmen.

Dick Amlet, *Mrs. Amlet*, and *Brass*, in the "Confederacy," are all perfection, after their kind,—the unfeeling son, whose legs are doted on by his mother; the peddling mother, hobbling about, with fine ladies in her debt; and *Brass*, exquisite *Brass*, whom one can hardly help fancying made of the metal that christens him, and with a voice that rings accordingly. We know of no better comic writing in the world than the earlier scenes of *Lord Foppington* in the "Relapse," and those between *Dick Amlet* and his mother, and of *Brass* securing his bargain with *Dick*, in the play before us.

We find we have passed over the "Provoked Wife," which, to say the truth, is a play more true than pleasant; and it is not so much needed as it was in Vanbrugh's days, when sottishness had not become infamous among decent people! So long do the vices of the stronger sex contrive to have themselves taken, if not for virtues, at least for something like manly privilege!

One reason has been given why "Æsop" did not succeed. Another we take to be that the French, in their old levity, used to think themselves bound to sit out any gravity that appealed to their good sense; while the English never pretended to be able to dispense with something strong and stirring. Besides, morality of so very obvious and didactic a sort was too great a contradiction to the taste of the times, and to Vanbrugh's own previous indulgence of it. Rakes scouring the streets at night, and ladies carried off swooning with love from antechambers, had ill prepared the sons and daughters of Charles the Second for the lessons of the sage Grecian, adapting his "wise saws" to "modern instances."

"How Van wants grace, who never wanted wit!"

says Pope: and it is true. Yet this graceless wit, often far less so than he appears, and covertly implying virtues superior to their common forms, has a passage in one of the coarsest of his plays, that preaches a love truer than any to be found in Pope:—

"*Constant.* Though marriage be a lottery, in which there are a wondrous many blanks, yet there is one inestimable lot, *in which the only heaven on earth is written.* Would your kind fate but guide your hand to that, though I were wrapt in all that luxury itself could clothe me with, I should still envy you.

Heartfree. And justly too: for to be CAPABLE *of loving one, is better than to possess a thousand.*"

Provoked Wife, Act v. sc. 4.

But the old question may here be asked, "What signify one or two passages of this sort, when all the rest is so different?" To which it should long ago have been answered, *everything;* when the difference is more in appearance than reality, and fighting the battles of virtue itself by unmasking the pretenders to it.

With the exception of a defence of himself against Collier, which will be noticed in its proper place, and the disputes respecting Blenheim with the Duchess of Marlborough, we know not of a single *miscellaneous* piece of writing of Vanbrugh's, except the following sprightly verses in Nichols's collection. It possesses, we fear, not a little of his usual "face," without his usual good-nature; but let us hope the lady knew nothing of it. However, if she added "tyranny" to want of beauty, his own willingness to please her, which was not the most ill-natured thing in the world, may be allowed to have had some reason to be discontented.

TO A LADY MORE CRUEL THAN FAIR.

BY MR. AFTERWARDS SIR JOHN VANBRUGH.

Why d'ye with such disdain refuse
 An humble lover's plea?
Since Heaven denies you power to chuse,
 You ought to value me.
Ungrateful mistress of a heart,
 Which I so freely gave,
Though weak your bow, though blunt your dart,
 I soon resign'd, your slave.
Nor was I weary of your reign,
 Till you a tyrant grew,
And seem'd regardless of my pain,
 As Nature seem'd of you.
When thousands with unerring eyes
 Your beauty would decry,
What graces did my love devise,
 To give their truths the lie!
To every grove I told your charms,
 In you my heaven I placed,
Proposing pleasures in your arms,
 Which none but I could taste.

("Jack, you certainly are an impudent dog!")

For me t' admire, at such a rate,
 So damn'd a face (!) will prove
You have as little cause to hate,
 As I had cause to love.

FARQUHAR.

George Farquhar, the son of a clergyman, some say of a dean of Armagh, others of a poorer man with a living of a hundred and fifty pounds a-year and seven children, was born in Londonderry, in the year 1678, and received there the rudiments of education. The humbler origin, as is generally the case, is most likely the true one; for when he was sent to Trinity College, Dublin, under the patronage of Dr. Wiseman, bishop of Dromore, he was entered as a sizer or servitor, the holder of the lowest rank among collegians, and one that used in those days to wait upon the others, after the fashion of a lay-brother in a monastery. To this ungenial position is partly perhaps to be attributed the character for "dulness," and even disagreeableness, with which, according to some of his biographers, he was charged at this period by his fellow-students; for, according to the description of himself given by his own pen in after life, and of the impression his first appearance made upon strangers, he seems always to have required a congeniality of circumstances to "fetch him out," and set the sprightliness and cordiality of his nature flowing. But those whom he served must have been duller than he, not to have detected the fire and good-nature that was in him, especially as the charge, singularly enough, was accompanied with objections to his having no taste for studies that were serious. Be this as it may, whether from uncomfortableness of position, or the death of his patron (as some say), or from the following ebullition of gracelessness, he did not remain his full time at the university. We gather from the statements of the biographers, that having had a college exercise given him, upon the subject of Christ's walking upon the water, he was very late with it; and making an offer, which was accepted, of contributing something on the spur of the moment, he either produced an audacious epigram, or made a remark before he sat down to write, referring to the proverb about "the man who is born to be hanged." The story is not very likely, unless those who set him the exercise were of a dulness and natural inferiority to himself, sometimes provoking to wits in the bud; nor, if the story is to be believed, are we to conclude that he meant any disrespect at heart, to the name which all good hearts must bow to. Wit and boldness are often thought good things for their own sake, especially by a youth; and great regret is felt afterwards for the pain they may have occasioned. The probability is, that whatever were the particular overt acts of petulance, or habits of nonconformity, of which Farquhar may have been guilty, he was no very regular student in general, nor fond of the tasks assigned him; perhaps had already become a lawless haunter of the theatres; and so between levity and natural genius he got an ill name, and a speedier dismissal than he would otherwise have had, into that greater university of the world, which he was fitted to adorn.

Whether he had already been in the green-room or not, he now rushed into it. He offered himself to the manager as an actor, was accepted (probably as a God-send, being a young gentleman from college), and came out forthwith in the character of *Othello*. It is touching to observe how fond almost all young actors are of making their first experiments in tragedy. It is not merely because tragedy ranks above comedy, and they are vain and ambitious; but because there is a sincerity and earnestness in all enthusiasm, which of itself is a grave feeling, and naturally enough impels them upon showing how much in earnest they are. Farquhar is said to have had a fair amount of ordinary qualifications for the stage, except voice and confidence. His voice wanted power; he never got over the disease well known by more actors than is supposed, called "stage-fright;" and though the audience always showed him a respectful attention, and his good qualities appear to have speedily widened his popularity with his sphere of action, an awkward circumstance completed the uneasiness of his theatrical endeavours, and, in the eighteenth year of his age, put an end to them for life. He was playing the part of the good lover and brother, *Guyomar*, in the "Indian Emperor" of Dryden, when having to kill *Vasquez*, and forgetting that he happened to wear a real sword instead of a foil, he wounded his brother-performer so dangerously, that his life was for some time despaired of. Farquhar's tender nature was so shocked, that he instantly quitted the boards. It is probable, however, that he would have turned out no great actor. No dramatist ever did. He is said to have been a beautiful reader of his plays; but he arrived at no eminence as one of their performers. Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Heywood, Lee, Otway, Murphy, all were actors in their time, for a greater or less period, but none have left a reputation as such. Perhaps a better actor-dramatist never appeared, than the author of "Virginius" and "William Tell;" and yet his sensible and manly performance on the stage by no means comes up to the height of his pen. Is it that the very sensibility of the poet baffles him in action? Yet how is it, in that case, that Ellen Tree is not hindered by her tears; or that Mr. Macready can feel the father so well in "Virginius," and yet act it better than the robust poet himself? Is it that the poet feels too many of the minute shades of the part he is acting, to go well enough to the main points of it? Hardly that; otherwise actors would not be great in proportion to their combination of these minute shades with general effect. Is it (to give one more conjecture) that the poet, being always accustomed to meditation rather than action, and feeling that a double merit is expected of him, is perplexed between habit and self-love? Something, perhaps, of that; and more, in all probability, from the necessary counter-habits of that meditation to the business, and bustle, and practical every-day life, of the rehearsing and reciting actor. Shakspeare might, perhaps, if he had chosen to set his wits that way, have been the greatest actor that ever lived; but then he could not have found time to be the poet he was. He would have missed the soft and still air, in which poetry delights to grow.

In the Dublin theatre Farquhar is supposed to have first become acquainted with Wilks the actor, whose celebrity he was destined to increase; and who, like himself, was born and educated in a sphere of life not so often found in connexion with the

stage as its friends might desire. Wilks about this time was returning to an engagement in London; Farquhar accompanied him, and is thought by some to have been indebted to his zeal for an introduction to the earl of Orrery, who gave him a commission in the regiment under his lordship's command in Ireland. Wilks has also the reputation of having made him a writer as well as a soldier. He is said to have never ceased encouraging the literary abilities he discerned in him, till he produced a play. But as nothing is known of this gentleman's connexion with Orrery, and he had no character assigned him in Farquhar's first production, the probability is at least equal, that our author's own family and promising genius procured him the favour of a nobleman, in whose race a congenial spirit was hereditary. Be this as it may, he retained his commission several years, in the course of which he is said to have given various proofs "both of courage and conduct," though how they were called forth during the languid conjuncture of affairs that took place during the period, we are not told; for Ireland had been lately pacified, and the new officer does not appear to have even looked upon any region of active service, till he went into Holland in the year 1700, where his letters do not imply his having taken part in it. However, it is not in battle alone that an officer may give proofs of spirit and capacity. At all events, Farquhar, no longer a "servitor," doubtless became a pleasant companion and messmate; and like a proper genius, he turned the lightest of his military experience to account, as we shall by and by have occasion to see. Gibbon himself, as he lets us understand, was not a heavy militia-man for nothing. The "Decline and Fall" felt the steps of his "marching and counter-marching." Captain Farquhar's plume floated over his genius for comedy, and his "reputation about town." It is curious to observe how many of our wits and dramatists of that period were captains. There was Captain Wycherley (for a time), then Captain Vanbrugh, Captain Farquhar, Captain Steele; with a plentiful minor crop of Captain Radcliffes and Ayloffs before them, as in our own time, or that of our fathers, we have had Captain Morrises and Tophams. Military service has indeed never been found uncongenial to letters, whether in its most positive or negative degree, from Cæsar down to Captain Tibullus, or Cervantes to Frederick of Prussia. The leisure in the intervals of study and enjoyment, contrasted with the idea of peril, as it serves to "make love," stimulates wit to the writing of verses. The French and English campaigns of the late wars have produced an abundance of authors; and it was probably in the intervals of his military duties, whether in field or in quarters, that Farquhar wrote half his comedies, beginning with his first, with its gay, officer-like title of "Love and a Bottle."

The author opens this piece in a way which, in all probability, was characteristic of his condition at the time, as well as of the good-natured sort of genius which the world was to expect of him. His hero enters, full of poverty and animal spirits, with a dramatic quotation in his mouth, an intimation of his wish to turn soldier, and with evidence of a tolerating disposition in the midst of his sarcasm.

"Act 1, Scene—Lincoln's Inn Fields.

"*Enter* ROEBUCK, *in a riding-habit, solus (repeating the following line).*

'*Thus far our arms have with success been crown'd.*'

Heroically spoken, i'faith, of a fellow that has not one farthing in his pocket. If I have one penny to buy a halter withal, in my present necessity, may I be hanged:—though I am reduced to a fair way of obtaining one methodically very soon, if robbery or theft will purchase the gallows. But hold—can't I rob honourably by turning soldier?

"*Enter* a Cripple, *begging.*

"*Crip.* One farthing to the poor old soldier, for the Lord's sake!

"*Roe.* Ha! A glimpse of damnation, just as a man is entering into sin, is no great policy of the devil.—But how long did you bear arms, friend?

"*Crip.* Five years, an't please you, sir.

"*Roe.* And how long has that honourable crutch borne you?

"*Crip.* Fifteen, sir.

"*Roe.* Very pretty! Five years a soldier, and fifteen a beggar! This is hell, right! an age of damnation for a momentary offence! Thy condition, fellow, is preferable to mine. The merciful bullet, more kind than thy ungrateful country, has given thee a debenture in thy broken leg, from which thou canst draw a more plentiful maintenance, than I from all my limbs in perfection. Prithee, friend, why wouldst thou beg of *me*? Dost think I am rich?

"*Crip.* No, sir; and therefore I believe you charitable. Your warm fellows are so much above the *sense* of our misery, that they *can't* pity us."

"Love and a Bottle," which came out at Drury Lane, in the year 1698, was well received. It has been thought strange, that the author's friend, Wilks, had no part in it; but arrangements of this kind often depend upon circumstances with which friendship, and the wishes of the parties, have nothing to do. We shall give a reason, however, by and by, why we take Wilks, with all his gaiety, to have been a very worldly, prudent man; and he might not have chosen to risk himself in a part untried. It is one thing to have a good opinion of a man's general abilities, and even to encourage him to adventure them in a particular direction (as Wilks is said to have done), and another to commit the adviser's fortunes with the experiments of the poor *advisee*. Wilks was glad enough, at all events, to appear in the next play of the now successful dramatist.

Success, wit, and his cheerful good-nature, speedily obtained for Farquhar an influence upon the town; and we find, next year, a pleasant instance of it upon the future fortunes of the celebrated Mrs. Oldfield. She was then sixteen, and niece of a Mrs. Voss, who kept the Mitre Tavern, in St. James's Market. The story tells us, that Captain Farquhar, dining there one day, "heard Miss Nanny read a play behind the bar, with so proper an emphasis and such agreeable turns, suitable to each character, that he swore the girl was cut out for the stage, to which she had before expressed an inclination, being very desirous to try her fortune that way. Her mother, (continues the narrator, a *quondam* servant of Rich's, the manager,) the next time she saw Captain Vanbrugh, who had a great respect for the family, told him what was Captain Farquhar's advice; upon which he desired to know, whether, in the plays she read, her fancy was most pleased with tragedy or comedy. Miss, being called in, said comedy; she having, at that time, gone through all Beaumont and Fletcher's comedies; and the play she was reading, when Captain Farquhar dined there, was the "Scornful Lady." Captain Vanbrugh, shortly after, recommended her to Mr. Christopher Rich, who took her into the house, at the allowance of but fifteen

shillings per week. However, her agreeable figure, and the sweetness of her voice, soon gave her the preference, in the opinion of the whole town, to all the young actresses; and his grace the late Duke of Bedford being pleased to speak to Mr. Rich in her favour, he instantly raised her allowance to twenty shillings per week. Her fame and salary at length rose to their just merit *." We have made this extract, not only for the pleasant picture it furnishes of the young and afterwards famous beauty, first interesting Farquhar with reading "behind the bar," and then being "called in," and introduced to Vanbrugh, but out of respect to the memory of a generous woman, admirable in her day for her comic genius, and honourable with posterity as the patroness of Savage. It has been supposed that a tenderer reason grew in Farquhar's mind for the interest he took in the young actress; and that she is the *Penelope* of the letters which he has left us. She, at all events, retained a pleasant recollection of him. "I have often heard Mrs. Oldfield mention the many agreeable hours she had spent in Mr. Farquhar's company," says an authority referred to in her 'Memoirs.'" This is a privilege of the amiable, whatever circumstances may have conspired to part them.

The ensuing year, 1700, produced at the same theatre, the "Constant Couple."—And hereby hangs a little bit of a tale of discovery, which, in default of having anything newer to relate about Farquhar, will not be uninteresting to our brother Columbuses of the book-shops. In one of the thick and abundant catalogues, which Mr. Thorpe, the bookseller, so magnificently gives away, we lately met with the little volume entitled "Adventures of Covent Garden," to which Farquhar is said to have been indebted for some of the incidents in this play, and which had a note appended to it in the catalogue to that effect. Upon looking into it, we found in the fly-leaf the original of this note in the shape of a manuscript remark, under the signature of "Isaac Reed," to whom the book appears to have belonged; and upon consulting the article "Constant Couple" in one of the editions of the *Biographia Dramatica*, which had the benefit of the co-operation of Mr. Reed, the following observations made their appearance, being probably the above manuscript remark drawn out into due length:

"The *early* writers of the English drama appear to have made free, without scruple, with any materials for their dramas which fell in their way. The present is a remarkable instance. In the preceding year, 1699, was published a small volume, entitled 'The Adventures of Covent Garden, in Imitation of Scarron's City Romance,' 12mo, *a piece without the slightest degree of merit;* yet from thence our author (Farquhar) took the characters of Lady Lurewell and Colonel Standard, and the incidents of Beau Clincher and Tom Errand's change of clothes, with other circumstances. The character of Sir Harry Wildair, however, still remains the property of the author, and he is entitled to the credit of the general conduct of the piece. Perhaps his only fault may have been in not acknowledging the writer, *contemptible as he is*, to whom he was obliged."

Now on reading this book "without the slightest degree of merit," it is clear

* From "Memoirs of Mrs. Anne Oldfield," quoted in the *Biographia Britannica*, art. FARQUHAR.

enough that the author, "contemptible as he is," was Farquhar himself*! The "character" of Lady Lurewell, properly speaking, is not in the book, though some of her conduct is; neither is the production by any means "without the slightest degree of merit," for it possesses some good, hearty, criticism, in vindication of genius against rules; and what marks the production as Farquhar's, is not only this criticism (which he afterwards enlarged upon in his "Discourse upon Comedy"), and his mention of the author as "a young gentleman somewhat addicted to poetry and the diversions of the stage," to say nothing of his use of the "change of clothes," &c., but in this little prose work the poem first appears, which, with the addition of six lines, he afterwards published in his Miscellanies under the title of the "Lover's Night." In the "Adventures of Covent Garden" it consists of fifty-two lines; in the "Miscellanies," of fifty-eight. We "hope," as Shakspeare says, "here be proofs." We are far from wishing to undervalue the industry of Isaac Reed, or the utility of his researches; and mistakes are common to everybody: but we here see what was the amount of his criticism, when taken unawares. Scorn, which is perilous to the pretensions of the greatest men, is ruinous to those of the less.

It is curious enough, and perhaps was not without design, that the "Lurewell" of the "Constant Couple" and its sequel, whose early history in one respect resembles that of the famous Mrs. Manly, author of the "New Atalantis," is said in the play to have been the daughter of a "Sir Roger Manly." Mrs. Manly herself, who was making a noise at the time the play was written, was the daughter of a Sir Oliver Manly. She was a Tory, and very hostile to the Revolution, and Farquhar was a friend to it; but she was also a wit, a play-wright, and a woman of gallantry; Farquhar may have become acquainted with her in those characters; and from the result of a mixture of feelings, better guessed than described, might thus have been ultimately led to take a liberty with her name, hardly compatible with his own gallantry and good-nature; unless we are to suppose that he regarded a woman of her scandal-loving and uncompromising partisanship, as putting herself out of the pale of her sex. She herself libelled freely her own quondam admirers, Sir Richard Steele among them.

In the May of this year (1700), our author, whether by accident or design,—most likely the latter, as "everybody" seems to have been there, and a dramatist would probably go as a mourner,—was present at the much-discussed funeral of Dryden, of which he has given what Sir Walter Scott calls a "ludicrous account." The account (which the reader will see at the close of the life) is certainly written under an

* The whole title of the volume, which consists but of 58 pages in large type and small duodecimo, is "The Adventures of Covent Garden, in Imitation of Scarron's City Romance. *Et quorum pars magna fui.* London, printed by H. Hills, for R. Standfast, next door to the Three Tuns Tavern, just within Temple Bar. 1699." Somebody, in the copy before us, has turned 1699 into 1698, with a pen; and the date of "15th December" is added in the handwriting of the time, probably by the same person. By the motto *Et quorum pars*, &c., it appears that Farquhar had a personal and principal share in the "Adventures." The dedication is a whimsical *blank*, addressed to the author's acquaintance at Will's coffee-house; and at the close of the address to the reader, he says that nobody knows who the author is but his heroine Emilia, whom he threatens with discovery in turn, if disclosed by her.

impression of the ludicrous; but whatever exaggerations of the business may have been created by such reporters as impudent Tom Brown, and poor gossiping Mrs. Thomas, we cannot but think that the ceremony must have been mixed up with a good deal that was strange and ill-managed, and that precaution had not been taken to give the procession its proper gravity, or guard against the attendance of disrespected and disrespectful persons. Dryden passed his whole life between homage and abuse, the high life in which he was born, and the shifts to which narrow circumstances reduced him; and agreeably to this sort of existence, his very corpse, in a manner, seems to have been scrambled into its grave, betwixt anxiety and irreverence.

In the summer and autumn, the same year, we find our author in Holland, probably with his regiment, awaiting the anti-gallican movements of king William, which, however, came to little or nothing that season; nor does it appear that Farquhar ever saw any very hot service, whatever proofs he may have given of his aptitude for it. In his sympathy with those around him, and his zeal for the security of the Revolution, he persuaded himself that a knowledge of the Dutch language was necessary to the interests of his countrymen; and lamented that young gentlemen preferred going to France instead of Holland, in order to see the world; opinions that sound oddly enough from the lips of the lively Farquhar. But, like all wits of a high order, he had gravity as well as levity in his composition; and was easily attracted towards whatever he thought of importance to his fellow-creatures. In October, William returned to the Hague, where Farquhar then was, from one of his visits to his retreat at Loo; and the young dramatist and officer, destined to be one of the honours of his reign, and share a duration with posterity of which the phlegmatic sovereign little dreamt, appears to have come back to England in his train.

The next year saw a continuation of the "Constant Couple," in a new play entitled "Sir Harry Wildair," in which both Wilks and Mrs. Oldfield performep to admiration; but, like all sequels, its merits lay chiefly in associations with its precursor. A very small part, however, a servant, happening to fall into the hands of Norris, a man of quaint original humour, it fitted him so happily as to bring him into celebrity, and got its very name affixed to him in the bills of other plays. The same man, however, was, on a future occasion, designated "*Heigh-ho* Norris," in a play-bill, simply because he uttered a couple of lines, containing that exclamation, in a style of exquisite drollery*. So that it was the actor's humour, quite as much as the author's, that helped the "Sequel" to this odd bit of lustre.

In 1702 appeared the "Miscellanies," a small collection of letters, poems, and essays, originally called, we believe, "Love and Business,"—(for we have only seen it in the collected works). It has little merit, with the exception of an "Essay on Comedy," and was probably got together under some pressure of pecuniary trouble. Mrs. Oldfield is conjectured to have returned some letters, in order to contribute to it; and she is said to have taken great pleasure afterwards in perusing both them and the essay. Such passages

* Davies's *Dramatic Miscellanies*, vol. iii. p. 310.

as it contains, not unworthy of the writer, we have selected at the close of this memoir. One of the best pieces is a portrait of himself, painted with evidences of much candour and modesty, and yet to his advantage; and we doubt not it was a true one. A man is not obliged to tell falsehoods of himself, in order to obtain a reputation for the very sincerity which such a process must undo. It is enough if, being upon the whole an honest man, he is neither blind to his faults nor sets too great a store by his virtues; and it is interesting to think how many of these portraits (the fashion for which originated, we believe, in the social egotism of our pleasant neighbours across the Channel) contain manifest proofs of the same candid moderation as Farquhar's. But animal spirits are too often confounded with an overweening self-estimation. People are more often aware of their own defects, than the world give them credit for being. Only in the ignorant it exhibits itself in a jealous irritability. Wiser men alone know how to reconcile the uneasiness of one part of self-knowledge, with the humanities that help to make up for it in the other.

The "Inconstant," or "The Way to win him," founded on Fletcher's "Wild Goose Chase," appeared in 1703, but not with as much success as might be supposed from its having kept possession of the stage. It was hurt by the reigning fashion for dancers from the Continent; and the critics appear to have been greatly divided about itself; why, it is no longer very clear. The lovers of the old poetic play resented perhaps the author's free and easy way of almost appropriating it to himself in his prose version.

As this is about the time that Farquhar married, we are led to glance round upon his previous life, and to wish to know more of it. Little, however, can bo collected, and his letters want dates for what there can. Some of them are written from Gray's Inn, and another from the Inner Temple; probably from coffee-houses; though anybody may live in an inn of court. When he was in Holland, he visited the Brill, Leyden, Rotterdam, and the Hague. On his return we find him at one time in Essex, hare-hunting (not in the style of a proficient); at another at Richmond, sick; and at a third, in Shropshire, on a recruiting party, where he was treated with great hospitality, and found the materials for one of the best of his plays. When he was in Holland he appears to have rescued a lady from some villanous design upon her. She was the same with whom he afterwards condoles in one of the letters, upon a suspicious robbery which she said she had undergone. Probably it was the woman he married.

At what exact time this marriage took place, whether it was before or after the production of the "Inconstant," we cannot say; but the event itself was almost as dramatic as any in his writings; though, unfortunately, more tragic in its results. A lady had fallen in love with him, and knew of no better way to recommend herself as his wife than by pretending to be in possession of a fortune. The grateful and gallant dramatist took the wife without being so unpolite as to secure the fortune; and though the lady confessed to him that her love had played him a trick,—or rather perhaps, out of a secret and not unamiable vanity of comfort in the very confession,—Farquhar not only forgave her, but never breathed to her a syllable of reproach. We shall see too well, before long, how deeply this truly gentlemanly forbearance redounded to his honour.

Our author's dramatic productions now keep a remarkable regularity of pace with the dates of the years. The "Inconstant" came out, as we have seen, in 1703. 1704 produced the "Stage-Coach;" a poor copy from the French, written in conjunction with Motteux,—probably on his first awakening from the dream of the lucky marriage. The "Twin Rivals" followed in 1705; the "Recruiting Officer," a great advance upon his previous dramas, in the year following; and the "Beaux Stratagem," his last and best, in 1707. These dates, to be sure, do not correspond throughout with those assigned by the latest authorities to their respective appearances in print; and in truth it would be difficult, even had we the printed copies before us, to decide upon such matters, unless we possessed thorough information respecting the dates both of representation and publication; which, perhaps, if desirable, would be impossible, especially considering the confusion created by the unsettled calendar of those days, and the tricks played with it by the booksellers. Be this as it may, it is likely enough that Farquhar would produce a play a year, and with an eye to the payment of annual debts. The wonder indeed is, that he did not write oftener, considering his wit and poverty; but he had also the duties of his regiment to attend to, and his health was not good. It is thought to have declined with the discovery of the deception that had been put upon him, or perhaps we should rather say, with the increase of the anxious tenderness which it caused in him towards a growing family.

This anxiety unfortunately subjected him to another deception, which is thought to have occasioned his death. Some patron, filling him with hopes of another kind of preferment, which he represented as certain, tempted him to sell out of the army. The poor dramatist, when the proceeds were spent, found the patron without truth, and himself without a prospect or a penny. He took to his sick chair; retained enough of the blissful abstraction of genius to write the "Beaux Stratagem" in six weeks; and died during the height of its success, before he had attained his thirtieth year! He is supposed to have been buried in the churchyard of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. A dying anecdote, full of his usual good-temper and pleasantry, shows that he had foreseen his exit. Wilks, during the rehearsal of the play, observing to him that Mrs. Oldfield wished he could have thought of some more legitimate divorce in order to secure the "honour" of *Mrs. Sullen*, "Oh," said Farquhar, "I will, if she pleases, solve that immediately, by getting a real divorce, marrying her myself, and giving her my bond that she shall be a widow in less than a fortnight."—Poor, nature-loving, cheerful, melancholy Farquhar! And so, turning away perhaps with the tears in his eyes at the thought of his real wife and his children, he perished.

Well, being the man he was, and giving a great deal of pleasure to his fellow-creatures, he must upon the whole have had a far happier life of it, than a melancholy. Yet a great sorrow remains to be told. We hardly know whether pleasure or grief predominates, when we read his dying thanks to Wilks in his short preface,—reminding us of the more exquisite words on the like occasion, addressed to the Conde de Lemos, by the great Cervantes, and prefixed to his romance of "Persiles and

Sigismunda;" but what are we to think were his feelings, when he wrote the following death-bed letter to Wilks:—

"DEAR BOB,

"I have not anything to leave thee, to perpetuate my memory, but two helpless girls. Look upon them sometimes, and think of him that was, to the last moment of his life, thine. GEORGE FARQUHAR."

This simple brevity, and even the gay familiarity of the address, has something in it affecting beyond the ordinary, and, in some measure, self-repaying solemnity of tragical expressions. And our sorrow is heightened, when we hear one of his biographers telling us, that he had often heard Farquhar say he would rather undergo the most violent death than think of his family wanting needful support.

"But it served him right,"—some luckier formalist may exclaim, more comfortable in the vanity of the opinion than in the real feeling of it (for man's heart is generally juster to itself at bottom, as you may know by the uneasy tone in which such opinions are expressed), "He should not have led such a careless life, nor trusted so foolishly to a patron."—Nay, judge him not, thou poor happier, unhappier man; his larger and livelier sympathies with his fellow-creatures produced works that delight them still, and that blinded him to the probability of his own early fate, till the truth came in agony upon him. Kind nature makes out her case somehow. He was careless and unlucky, and we profit by it. Thou art careful and luckier, and profitest by it thyself. Let thy children bless thee; as they will, if thou art more charitable in thy speech. Good would it have been for those of poor Farquhar, if others had had as great faith in human kindness as he.

It is said in the biographies, that Wilks, who was a rich man, acted up to the spirit of the compliment paid him. Noble Betterton did, to a compliment exactly similar; and Betterton was not rich. Wilks's conduct is unfortunately doubtful. He certainly was not "bound," as the phrase is, to be generous and romantic, if his nature did not induce him; but when praise is given him for being so, the rest of the story cannot remain unnoticed. All that is distinctly stated to have been done by Wilks is, that he ultimately procured a benefit for the two daughters, and put them out apprentices to mantua-makers: and yet even in those very biographies, which laud him to the skies for "having paid the most punctual regard to the request of his dying friend," and can find no further proof of it than this benefit and the mantua-making, it is added, that Farquhar's widow "died in circumstances of the utmost indigence;" that "one of his daughters was married to a low tradesman, and died soon after;" and that "the other was living in 1764, in mean and indigent circumstances, without any knowledge of refinement either in sentiment or expenses;" seeming to take "no pride in her father's fame," and "in every respect fitted to her humble situation."—This humble situation, we believe, was that of a maid-servant.

Now, it is certainly possible enough, that the woman who could deceive Farquhar, as his wife had done, might have been of such a lax turn of mind altogether, as to

tire out or even disgust assistance, and so be reasonably left to her fate;—as far, that is to say, as any human being reasonably can be so. And it is to be observed, that Farquhar, with all his toleration and his tenderness, does not venture to name her to Wilks in his letter. But how could these children, to any purpose, have been "sometimes looked upon," as the poor dramatist touchingly phrases it, if their education and prospects, as it would seem by the above account, had been totally neglected? Why need the one have married a "low tradesman;" and the other have become a servant, totally destitute of breeding, and taking no pride in her father's fame? It may be said, that probably they "took after the mother," tired out their benefactor, and could not end otherwise than they did. But in having no proofs, or even distinct assertions, that he did anything more for them than give them a benefit, and "put them out" as mantua-makers, how are we to take for granted that he ever did anything else, or even so much; still less, that he gave them the least taste of what the father must have most desired,—something of a decent education, and of the hopes to be founded on it? Looking at the accounts of Wilks left us by Cibber, Davies, and others, and making due allowance for theatrical jealousies, the impression, we are bound to say, is not faveurable to the refinement of his character. He was vehement, jealous, and fond of power;—dictatorial himself, and therefore the last man in the world to like whatever he might think dictation in those whom he considered as equals or inferiors. Farquhar's very praises of such a man, swelling the amount of adulation too generally bestowed on successful actors, is likely to have done his vanity no good, nor abated the absurd comparisons he would be inclined to make between poor men of genius and a rich performer. In short, we like not his looks in this matter, nor even his supercilious looks in his portraits; and before we give him the praise of Betterton, must again call for *proofs* versus *results*.

It is proper, nevertheless, to state (for under no circumstances, and at no distance of time, are men's characters to be conjectured to their prejudice, in the absence of such testimony as can do them service), that Davies in his "Dramatic Miscellanies," vol. iii. p. 485, speaks of the "honest and steady character" of "Robert Wilks" in the maintenance of "everything that was decent, just, and generous." Nor is this general impression of a character (if such it was) to be lightly affected by the charges which Davies, on this occasion, is disputing in the teeth of "two such interested men" (so he calls them) as Cibber and Dogget, whose great complaint against Wilks was his "impetuous and overbearing temper." On the other hand, we do not well see how this character for the maintenance of everything "decent, just, and generous," is compatible with Davies's own charge against Wilks in another place (p. 256), of his "depriving the inoffensive Harry Carey of the liberty of the scenes, because he had, in common with others, made merry with Cibber in a song, on his being appointed poet-laureat: saying, at the same time, he (Wilks) was surprised at his *impertinence*, in behaving so improperly to *a man of such great merit;*"—that is to say, to a presumptuous brother-actor and a ridiculous laureat. Cibber, it is true, had merit, but not greater than the naïve author and composer thus impertinently rebuked; nor was he so good and kind a man. But let us take the bitter taste of these doubts about

Wilks out of our mouths, by repeating, from Davies's book, that there is no doubt about the conduct of the great and good actor Betterton. "The misfortune," says he, (p. 416,) "which Betterton sustained, by losing the greatest part of his fortune in a venture in the East Indies, is very exactly related in the 'Biographia Britannica.' His behaviour on this memorable occasion reflects honour on the magnanimity of his mind. *His taking into his house, and educating at his own expense*, the daughters of his ruined friend *who had engaged him in the unhappy adventure*, places him in a rank with Satyrus the Greek comedian, whose generosity to the captive daughters of his dead host I have related in my observations on the second act of 'Hamlet.' The daughter of Betterton's unhappy friend was married to Mr. Bowman, whom I have often had occasion to mention. She was admired as a very fine woman, and a pleasing actor." *Let the reader observe, that Davies, with all his regard for Wilks, never thinks on this occasion of bringing up his behaviour to the daughters of Farquhar; not even though the book which he corroborates respecting Betterton's conduct, the Biographia Britannica, is one of those in which it is related.* Does not this go to prove that he, Davies, himself an actor, and conversant with stage history, had no belief in *that* proof of Wilks's virtues*?

In the memoirs of the life of Wilks, quoted in the "Biographia Britannica," a pension of twenty pounds a year is said to have been procured for the daughters of Farquhar by the "worthy friend and patron to whom he dedicated his Miscellanies, Edmund Chaloner, Esq." But nothing certain seems known, except their ultimate poverty.

Farquhar, according to his own modest account of himself, had little exterior resemblance to the confident, airy gallants which he is supposed to have painted after his likeness. He says, he had something in his manners which gave strangers a worse opinion of him than he deserved. With all his animal spirits, he was subject to melancholy; and

* The case of Satyrus, the Greek player, is so much to the purpose, and so beautiful in itself, that the reader, we are sure, will be glad to see it quoted. It is contained in a passage of Demosthenes, of which Davies has given a version, apparently his own; and was as follows:—"When Philip of Macedon had taken the city of Olynthus, he celebrated the Olympic Games. He invited to the festival all the professors of the fine arts. He entertained them with the choicest banquets, and bestowed crowns upon the victors. During the height of the festival, he asked Satyrus the comedian why, of all his guests, he alone had asked for no gift, nor desired any mark of his favour. Did he suppose him to be of a mean and sordid disposition? or did he conceive that he had entertained any ill-will towards him?—Satyrus modestly replied, that he stood in no need of those acts of munificence which others demanded. What he should request of the king, could with the greatest facility be granted; but he had some fears lest his petition should be rejected. Philip encouraged him to urge his demand; and with a facetious gaiety, assured him that he should refuse nothing he should ask. Satyrus then informed the king, that his old acquaintance and host, Apollophanes of Pydna, having been slain through treachery, his relations, terrified at the accident, had for safety conveyed his two daughters to Olynthus; but as that city had now become subjected to his majesty's laws, they were in the condition of prisoners and captives. Now, the sole boon I shall beg of you, continued the player, is, that you would give orders for their deliverance into my hands; not for the sake of gaining any advantage to myself, but that I may bestow on them portions equal to their birth and education, *and prevent their falling into any hardship or disgrace unworthy of me or their father*.—The whole assembly upon hearing this generous request of Satyrus, broke out into loud and tumultuous applause; and Philip, with a good grace, immediately complied with his wishes." —*Dram. Miscellanies*, vol. vii. p. 55. The article on Farquhar in the *Biographia Britannica* was written by Oldys.

though greatly inclined to gallantry, was so cautious of giving way to it as to surprise the sex with his apparent inattention. Like a proper "captain," however, he professed not to be able to answer for his constancy. His appearance (if we may judge from the portrait of him in one of the editions) was sickly, with a care-worn face; and he generally dressed in black. He was an agreeable singer. His studies he appears to have pursued with temperate regularity, devoting to them three hours a day. He was not capricious nor ill-tempered; hated to give pain; was easily deceived, but not a second time; had "many acquaintances, very few intimates, and no friend in the old romantic way," (that is to say, one to whom a man is enthusiastically devoted,) "and the greatest proof of my affection that a lady must expect," he says, "is this:—I would run any hazard to make us both happy, but would not, for any transitory pleasure, make either of us miserable."

In short, our author was a good-natured, sensitive, reflecting man, of so high an order of what may be called the *town* class of genius, as to sympathise with mankind at large upon the strength of what he saw of them in little, and to extract from a quintessence of good sense an inspiration just short of the romantic and imaginative; that is to say, he could turn what he had experienced in common life to the best account, but required in all cases the support of its ordinary associations, and could not project his spirit beyond them. He felt the little world too much, and the universal too little. He saw into all false pretensions, but not into all true ones; and if he had had a larger sphere of nature to fall back upon in his adversity, would probably not have died of it. The wings of his fancy were too common, and grown in too artificial an air, to support him in the sudden gulfs and great aching voids of that new region, and enable him to beat his way to their green islands. His genius was so entirely social, that notwithstanding what appeared to the contrary in his personal manners, and what he took for his own superiority to it, it compelled him to assume in his writings all the airs of the most received town ascendancy; and when it had once warmed itself in this way, it would seem that it had attained the healthiness natural to its best condition, and could have gone on for ever, increasing both in enjoyment and power, had external circumstances been favourable. He was becoming gayer and gayer, when death, in the shape of a sore anxiety, called him away, as if from a pleasant party, and left the house ringing with his jest.

In looking critically at Farquhar's plays in succession, nothing need be added to what has been said respecting the earliest one, "Love and a Bottle," except that much of the talk is gratuitous, and that in this play, perhaps more than in any of the rest, is to be seen the "pert low dialogue" which Pope accused him of writing; that is to say, brisk only, with a pretence of something better, and on that account wanting in an air of good breeding. Nor is *Sir Harry Wildair* without it in the "Constant Couple," nor even *Archer* in his last play, the "Beaux-Stratagem." It was probably owing to the conflict between the author's habits of personal reserve, and his sympathy in spirit with all that was the reverse. Goldsmith, who was a very diffident man, carried the same error into his *Young Marlow* in "She Stoops to Conquer;" or rather would have carried it, had not the very intensity of his conscious-

ness of the danger ingeniously converted it into a part of his comic intention. And *Marlow*, who in one of his situations is a copy of *Archer*, is, after all, really pert, and gives himself airs, to the supposed chambermaid, beyond what a thorough-bred gentleman would have done. *Sir Harry Wildair*, nevertheless, as Steele said, is very entertaining in spite of what that good-natured critic himself thought "low;" and will always interest, as a kind of epitome of youthful spirits and freedom from care, let loose upon the world. The plot of the play is as lively as the character, and, like most of Farquhar's plots, is the author's own; and, considering the manners of the times, almost everything is natural in it, with the exception of the outrageously farcical notion of the swimming-girdle, which was to carry Clincher to Civita Vecchia.

Farquhar, who had been so modest in his preface to the "Constant Couple" as to describe himself "below the envy of great wits and above the malice of little ones," had either got so warmed into a better opinion of himself by the time he wrote the "Inconstant," or perhaps was really so unaware of the superiority of a great *poetical* genius, as to brand those who accused him of spoiling Fletcher's "Wild-goose Chace" with wishing them no other injury than that they "would say it again!" *Spoiling*, it certainly could not be called; any more than it could be called spoiling an eagle's wing to pluck a feather from it, and turn it into a toy. But the wording of the taunt implies something contemptuous of a reverence towards the eagle; and this becomes a blindness to the height to which the eagle soared. Farquhar's "Inconstant" is a pleasant play (as far as the chief characters as well as the plot are pleasant; which we cannot, we own, very well think they are, either in the copy or the original); but compared with the "Wild Goose Chace," it is not a whit livelier, nor indeed so lively, nor has it anything of the other's robust and masterly expression or imagination. It is, in truth, with the exception of the highly interesting adventure that is taken from a fact in the history of a French gentleman, neither more nor less than Fletcher's play with all the poetry taken out of it;—the age of the demi-gods of Elizabeth, brought down to the standard of the sprightly parade officers of the times of Captains Vanbrugh and Farquhar. We are not to suppose that Apollo could have been less of a "gay fellow about town," if he chose it, than the wittiest gallant that stuck a bay-leaf in his peruke: only, without question, (if that be "spoiling,") his language would have had ten ideas in it to the other's one.

The "Twin Rivals" was an attempt to write a comedy in a fit of critical instead of playful inspiration. Critics have spoken well of it accordingly, and thought it the completest of his productions; but the town did not like it, nor did the author repeat the experiment. Collier, it seems, by Farquhar's own account, had piqued him into an endeavour to show how moral and profoundly satirical he could be. It is the story of a Hunchback, (very different from Mr. Knowles's,) who in a most impudent manner, as a retaliation upon fortune, tries to deprive his elder brother of a title and estate. Upon looking through it again, while writing this paragraph, we find we have not marked in it a dozen lines.

In the "Recruiting Officer" he took his revenge; threw himself entirely upon his animal spirits, and produced accordingly one of his very best plays. In everything connected with it he was fortunate; for he went only upon grounds of truth and observation, and his own impulses. The humours were drawn from what he had seen while he was on the recruiting party to which we have alluded; his hospitable friends "round the Wrekin," to whom it was dedicated, furnished some of the characters; the play was written on the spot; his Colonel and his General liked it (Lord Orrery and the Duke of Ormond); the principal *dramatis personæ* were represented by the best reigning performers (Wilks, Cibber, Estcourt, and Mrs. Oldfield); and it gained that kind of success, from which the author might have foreseen that it would retain possession of the stage. It has been stated by Nichols, on the authority of an old lady who remembered Farquhar and his recruiting party, that *Justice Balance* was Mr. Berkeley, at that time Warden of Shrewsbury; that another of the Justices was a Mr. Hill, of that city; *Worthy*, a Mr. Owen, of *Russason; Melinda*, a Miss Harnage, of *Balsadine;* and *Sylvia*, the Recorder's daughter. *Plume* was, of course, pronounced to be "himself;" but if the play, as it is asserted, and is probable, was written within a year of the "Beaux Stratagem," the gay Captain could only have been the imaginary Farquhar;—gay enough, we doubt not, while so imagining, but in his own person, an anxious married man. Steele, who had a grudge against Farquhar, because he thought him wanting in sentiment, attributed the "support" of the play to the admirable performance of his friend Estcourt. "There is not," he says, "in my humble opinion, the humour hit in *Serjeant Kite;* but it is admirably supplied by his action." Succeeding times have not accorded with this criticism. Every character in the piece, of any prominence, is thought to be a genuine transcript from nature; and there is a charm of gaiety and good-humour throughout it, that enables us to put the best and least tragical construction upon certain anti-sentimentalities, which Steele perhaps was too much out of his customary good-humour to choose to consider in any light but one. We seem to breathe the clear, fresh, ruddy-making air of a remote country town, neighboured by hospitable elegances. The sturdy male peasants will find their legs in life somehow, as the *Serjeant* has done; and the females will be taken more care of by the *Captain* himself, and by the good-natured *Sylvia* too, than the censor at first sight might suppose. The morals are not the best, we allow; and especially in the matter of *lying* (which always gives us a pang), they may be infinitely improved, as we doubt not they will, though not from the austerest quarters. When the best morals arrive, everybody will be as happily taken care of as the "ladies" themselves;—not the case certainly at present, nor provided for even by the prospective ethics of dear, excellent Richard Steele.

The sprightly success of the "Recruiting Officer" had probably the happiest effect upon the composition of our author's best and most successful production, the "Beaux Stratagem;" an excellent play, which, like the one just mentioned, and the "Inconstant," is always acted whenever actors can be found. Its plot is new, simple, and interesting; the characters various, without confusing it; the dialogue sprightly

and characteristic; the moral bold, healthy, admirable, and doubly needed in those times, when sottishness was a fashion. *Archer* and *Aimwell*, who set out as mere intriguers, prove in the end true gentlemen, candid, conscientious, and generous. *Scrub* and *Boniface*, though but a servant and an innkeeper, are quotable fellows both, and have made themselves prominent in theatrical recollection,—the former especially, for his quaint ignorance and sordid cunning. And *Mrs. Sullen* is the more touching in her distress, from the cheerfulness with which she wipes away her tears. *Sullen* is an awful brute, yet not thoroughly inhuman; for he feels after all that he has no right to such a wife. The only fault in the termination, is what Mrs. Oldfield objected to,—that the law had provided no sanction for it; so that it became but a higher kind of sale by halter. But what a lesson did not this very want imply? The footsteps of the gravest ultimate reforms are often found in places where they are least looked for. But Nature speaks there, and there they come.

Farquhar's Irishmen have been thought not to be truly Irish, especially in regard to the brogue. We cannot speak to this; but if the objection is well founded with respect to the people in general, might it not be otherwise removable, upon the ground that he drew his Irish from the northern or semi-Scottish part of the country?

We conclude this division of our task with some passages from Farquhar's "Letters," and from the sensible "Essay on Comedy." The poems are not worthy of his reputation. His best prologues and epilogues were written by impudent Joe Haines, and a Frenchman—Motteux—remarkable for his mastery of our idiom, and for being the best English translator of "Don Quixote." Farquhar is understood to have left no manuscripts. We could not find any in the British Museum; and a few hours before he died he is said to have thrown what he had into the fire, observing that he had "no remains worth saving." There is a printed poem, however, which we have never seen, and which we sought for in vain at the library of the Museum, both in the catalogue, and by inquiring of the courteous gentlemen there, who did all they could to assist us. It is called "Barcelona," and was written upon the capture of that city by the great *preux chevalier*, the Earl of Peterborough. In the "Biographia Britannica" is the prose dedication of it to him, written with considerable vigour and elegance, and signed "Margaret Farquhar,"—his widow. If really her composition, she must have been a woman of no ordinary understanding.

A DUTCH SKIPPER.

A jolly skipper at the stern of his barge, with a furred cap like rays about his head, the helm in his hand, and his pipe in his mouth, with Liberty seated in one whisker, and Property in t'other.

GENEROUS COMMERCIAL POLICY.

One day upon the Exchange at Rotterdam, I casually met a gentleman, who some time ago lived one of the most considerable merchants in Ireland, and about some four years since, by great losses at sea, was forced to fly his country in a very mean condition. I put him in mind of his misfortunes by a favour he once conferred upon me of a bottle of claret and a neat's tongue, at launching of a new ship that he had built in Dublin; which vessel (bottom and goods all his own) was unfortunately lost the very first voyage. The gentleman seemed very sensible of his misfortunes, but withal told me, that he

still had a glass of wine and a tongue at my service, if I would come and see him at his house that evening. I made him a visit, and found, to my no small surprise, a handsome house, neatly furnished, excellent meat, and as good burgundy as ever joyed the heart of man. I took the freedom to ask my merchant, how a bankrupt should come by all this; in answer to which he gave me the following account of his affairs.

"The Dutch, sir," said he, "have a law, that whatever merchant in any part of Europe, who has had any considerable traffic with this country, whose honesty is apparent by his former accounts, and can prove by sufficient testimony, that his losses and misfortunes are not chargeable upon his ignorance nor extravagance, but purely those of unfortunate chance, above the reach of human prevention; that then such a merchant may repair to them, have the freedom of any sea-port in the state, have a supply of whatever money he's willing to take up out of the public revenue, upon the bare security of his industry and integrity; and all this upon the current interest, which is seldom above four per cent.

"Pursuant to this," continued the gentleman, "my qualifications for this credit being sufficiently testified, I took up here two thousand pounds sterling, and in two years have gained fifty per cent. So that by God's assistance, and my own diligent endeavours, I question not but in a few years I shall be able to show my face to my creditors, return to my country, and there live *in statu quo*."

DRYDEN'S FUNERAL.

I come now from Mr. Dryden's funeral, where we had an Ode in Horace sung, instead of David's Psalms; whence you may find, that we don't think a poet worth christian burial. The pomp of the ceremony was a kind of rhapsody, and fitter I think for Hudibras than him, because the cavalcade was mostly burlesque; but he was an extraordinary man, and buried after an extraordinary fashion; for I do believe there was never such another burial seen. The oration indeed was great and ingenious, worthy the subject, and like the author, whose prescriptions can restore the living, and his pen embalm the dead.* And so much for Mr. Dryden, whose burial was the same with his life: variety and not of a piece; the quality and mob, farce and heroics; the sublime and ridicule mixt in a piece; great Cleopatra in a hackney-coach.

RATIO OF DEMAND FOR LONG SERMONS.

I have observed in my little travels, that a sermon of three quarters of an hour that might please the congregation at St. James's, would never satisfy the meeting-house in the city, where people expect more for their money; and having more temptations of roguery, must have a larger portion of instruction.

LAWFUL FREEDOM OF THE DRAMA FROM "CLASSIC RULES."

The rules of English comedy don't lie in the compass of Aristotle, or his followers, but in the pit, box, and galleries. And to examine into the humour of an English audience, let us see by what means our own English poets have succeeded in this point. To determine a suit at law we don't look into the archives of Greece or Rome, but inspect the reports of our lawyers, and the acts and statutes of our Parliaments; and by the same rule we have nothing to do with the models of Menander or Plautus, but must consult Shakspeare, Jonson, Fletcher, and others, who by methods much different from the ancients have supported the English stage, and made themselves famous to posterity. We shall find that these gentlemen have fairly dispensed with the greatest part of critical formalities; the decorums of time and place, so much cried up of late, had no force of decorum with them; the economy of their plays was *ad libitum*, and the extent of their plots only limited by the convenience of action. I would willingly understand the regularities of Hamlet, Macbeth, Henry the Fourth, and of Fletcher's Plays; and yet these have long been the darlings of the English audience, and are like to continue with the same applause, in defiance of all the criticisms that ever were published in Greek and Latin.

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A play may be written with all the exactness imaginable, in respect of unity in time and place; but if you inquire its character of any persons, though of the meanest understanding of the whole audience,

* Garth.

he will tell you it is intolerable stuff; and upon your demanding his reasons, his answer is, I don't like it: his humour is the only rule that he can judge a comedy by, but you find that mere nature is offended with some irregularities; and though he be not so learned in the drama, to give you an inventory of the faults, yet I can tell you, that one part of the plot had no dependence upon another, which made this simple man drop his attention and concern for the event; and so disengaging his thoughts from the business of the action, he sat there very uneasy, thought the time very tedious, because he had nothing to do. The characters were so incoherent in themselves, and composed of such variety of absurdities, that in his knowledge of nature he could find no original for such a copy; and being therefore unacquainted with any folly they reproved, or any virtue that they recommended, their business was as flat and tiresome to him, as if the actors had talked Arabic.

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I am as little a friend to certain rambling plays as anybody, nor have I ever espoused their party by my own practice; yet I could not forbear saying something in vindication of the great Shakspeare, whom every little fellow that can form an *aoristus primus* will presume to condemn for indecorums and absurdities; sparks that are so spruce upon their Greek and Latin, that, like our fops in travels, they can relish nothing but what is foreign, to let the world know they have been abroad forsooth! But it must be so, because Aristotle said it! Now I say it must be otherwise, because Shakspeare said it; and I am sure that Shakspeare was the greater poet of the two. But you will say that Aristotle was the greater critic. That's a mistake, sir; for criticism in poetry is no more than judgment in poetry; which you will find in your Lexicon. Now, if Shakspeare was the better poet, he must have the most judgment in his art; for everybody knows that judgment is an essential part of poetry, and without it no writer is worth a farthing.

FARQUHAR'S PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF.

To a Lady.

In pursuance to your order, madam, I have sent you, here inclosed, my picture; and I challenge Vandyke or Kneller to draw more to the life. You are the first person that ever had it; and if I had not some thoughts that the substance would fall to your share, I would not part with my likeness. I hope the colours will never fade, though you may give me some hints where to mend the features, having so much power to correct the life.

THE PICTURE.

My outside is neither better nor worse than my Creator made it, and the piece being drawn by so great an artist, 'twere presumption to say there were many strokes amiss. I have a body qualified to answer all the ends of its creation, and that's sufficient.

As to the mind, which in most men wears as many changes as their body, so in me 'tis generally drest like my person, in black. Melancholy is its every day apparel; and it has hitherto found few holidays to make it change its clothes. In short, my constitution is very splenetic, and yet very amorous; both which I endeavour to hide lest the former should offend others, and that the latter might incommode myself. And my reason is so vigilant in restraining these two failings, that I am taken for an easy natured man with my own sex, and an ill-natured clown by yours.

'Tis true, I am very sparing in my praises and compliments to a lady, out of a fear that they may affect myself more than her. For the idols that we worship are generally of our own making; and though at first men may not speak what they think, yet truth may catch them on t'other hand, and make them think what they speak. But most of all am I cautious of promising, especially upon the weighty article of constancy; because, in the first place, I have never tried the strength of it in my own experience; and, secondly, I suppose a man can no more engage for his constancy than for his health, since I believe they both equally depend upon a certain constitution of body; and how far and how frequently that may be liable to alteration, especially in affairs of love, let the more judicious determine.

But so far a man may promise, that if he find not his passion grounded on a false foundation, and that he have a continuance of the same sincerity, truth and love to engage him; that then his reason, his honour, and his gratitude, may prove too strong for all changes of temper and inclination.

I am a very great Epicure; for which reason I hate all pleasure that's purchased by excess of pain. I am quite different from the opinion of men that value what's dearly bought; long expectation makes the blessing always less to me; for by often thinking of the future joy, I make the idea of it familiar to me, and so I lose the great transport of surprise; 'tis keeping the springs of desire so long upon the rack, till at last they grow loose and enervate: besides, any one of a creative fancy, by a duration of thoughts, will be apt to frame too great an idea of the object, and so make the greater part of his hopes end in a disappointment.

I am seldom troubled with what the world calls airs and caprices; and I think it an idiot's excuse for a foolish action, to say 'twas my humour. I hate all little malicious tricks of vexing people, for trifles, or teasing them with frightful stories, malicious lies, stealing lap-dogs, tearing fans, breaking china, or the like: I can't relish the jest that vexes another in earnest. In short, if ever I do a wilful injury, it must be a very great one.

I am often melancholy, but seldom angry; for which reason I can be severe in my resentment, without injuring myself. I think it the worst office to my nature to make myself uneasy for what another should be punished.

I am easily deceived, but then I never fail at last to find out the cheat; my love of pleasure and sedateness makes me very secure, and the same reason makes me very diligent when I am alarmed.

I have so natural a propensity to ease, that I cannot cheerfully fix to any study, which bears not a pleasure in the application; which makes me inclinable to poetry above anything else.

I have very little estate, but what lies under the circumference of my hat; and should I by mischance come to lose my head, I should not be worth a groat; but I ought to thank Providence that I can by three hours' study live one-and-twenty with satisfaction to myself, and contribute to the maintenance of more families than some who have thousands a year.

I have something in my outward behaviour, which gives strangers a worse opinion of me than I deserve; but I am more than recompensed by the opinion of my acquaintance, which is as much above my desert.

I have many acquaintance, very few intimates, but no friend; I mean, in the old romantic way. I have no secret so weighty, but what I can bear in my own breast; nor any duels to fight, but what I may engage in without a second; nor can I love after the old romantic discipline. I would have my passion, if not led, yet at least waited on by my reason; and the greatest proof of my affection that a lady must expect, is this: I would run any hazard to make us both happy, but would not for any transitory pleasure make either of us miserable.

Of the four dramatists of whom we have thus endeavoured to give some account, it appears to us that Wycherley was the most reflective for reflection's sake, the most terse with simplicity in his style, the most original in departing from the comedy in vogue, and adding morals to manners, and the least so with regard to plot and character: that Congreve was the wittiest, most scholarly, most highly bred, the most elaborate in his plots and language, and most pungent but least natural in his characters, and that he had the least heart: that Vanbrugh was the readiest and most straightforward, the least superfluous, the least self-referential, mistrusting, or morbid, and therefore, with more pardon, the least scrupulous,—caring for nothing but truth (as far as he saw it) and a strong effect: and that Farquhar had the highest animal spirits, with fits of the deepest sympathy, the greatest wish to please rather than to strike, the most agreeable diversity of character, the best instinct in avoiding revolting extravagances of the time, and the happiest invention in plot and situation; and, therefore,

is to be pronounced, upon the whole, the truest dramatic genius, and the most likely to be of lasting popularity; as indeed he has hitherto been. He has far surpassed them all, we believe, in the number of editions; and is certainly ten times acted to their once. The "Confederacy" upon the strength of *Brass*, and *Dick Amwell* and his mother, is the only play of Vanbrugh's that can compete, unaltered, with the quadruple duration of the "Constant Couple," the "Inconstant," the "Recruiting Officer," and the "Beaux Stratagem." His "Relapse" required to be turned into the "Trip to Scarborough," before his exquisite *Lord Foppington* could again be received into decent company. *Astrology* helps to pull down Congreve's "Old Bachelor," and tragic venom and monstrous vices his "Double Dealer." The "Way of the World" is an admirable comedy, it must be confessed, especially for the sovereign airs and graces of *Millamant;* yet it is tiresome in its very ingenuity, for its maze of wit and intrigue; and it has no heart, therefore wants the very soul of pleasure. There is a bit of heart in "Love for Love," and nature in *Miss Prue;* and Mesdames *Frail* and *Foresight* are exquisite. The Sailor also, as Johnson says, "if not very natural, is very amusing;" and in truth he is more natural than he has been thought, except in being the son of a man of fortune. Accordingly, "Love for Love" is the only one of Congreve's plays that can be called popular. Wycherley's "Country Wife" (the "Country Girl" of Garrick) will be immortal in some shape or other, but cannot re-appear as herself, or at least not in her former company; and even as herself she came from Molière. The "Constant Couple," "Recruiting Officer," and "Beaux Stratagem," are, in every respect, all Farquhar's own.

But all the works of these dramatists are still read, though they are not all acted; and that they are no longer all acted is not to be wholly attributed either to their vices or to our virtues. Manners alone make some difference. Conventional pleasantries go out and cease to be understood: conventional virtues also change, and are not always converted into others more real. We are not of necessity the better or more moral for thinking the worst we can of freer modes of speech, or even of conduct. Our ancestors may not have been so bad as we suppose them, even upon our own principles. Animal spirits often say more than they mean; and it is then our dulness and want of spirits that misconstrue the speakers. Vanity pretends to more than it performs; and so does our own when it affects an extreme the other way. The balance is not always settled in our favour merely by our looking grave on the matter, and showing that our virtue makes us neither merry nor charitable.

Again, the stage is not a mere copy of nature,—not a fac-simile; but the free running hand of genius, under the impression of its liveliest wit or most passionate impulses, a thousand times adorning or feeling all as it goes; and you must read it, as the healthy instinct of audiences almost always does if the critics will let them alone,—with a grain of allowance,—and a tendency to go away with as much of it for use as is necessary, and the rest for the luxury of laughter, pity, or poetical admiration. Farquhar's as well as Congreve's rakes, sometimes talk cruelly; but it is either towards imposture and trickery, or in the mere sting of the gusto of the will. They mean it to the letter as little as anybody; and we have seen that Farquhar himself

died of anxiety for his family. There may have been a vanity in it, in his first productions; and very painful and startling it always sounds; but the very love of pleasure, in a heart like his, ended in making him humane, giving him a strong sense of the right of pleasure in others; and it was doubtless out of a sense of the desire and feasibility of this for all the world, and a suspicion of the world's paining itself overmuch and not wisely, that he talked on some subjects as carelessly as he did, and not out of any indifference to the happiness and real virtues of mankind. Read him, and his still freer spoken brethren, in the liberal spirit of that understanding, and you are safe in proportion to the goodness and cheerfulness of your own heart. If you feel neither generous nor blithe in the perusal, neither moved to correct the letter of the worst passages by the spirit of the best, nor to feel that the whole has some healthy end beyond itself, thus mistrusting the final purposes and good-nature of Nature herself, as they operate through the medium of a lively art, you may certainly need restraints which these holiday-going dramatists are as certainly not in a condition to supply. And lucky will you be if you get them in mirth-denouncing quarters, without their depriving you of the charity which such writers do not deny to anybody, and thus subjecting you to those hard and melancholy views of the world itself, which are the worst results of conduct the most vicious. Every book, it is true, even the noblest, is not a child's book, nor a guide to ordinary conduct; but a mind, candidly and healthily trained, may be suffered to grow up in almost any library; and you may put premature fears in it, far worse than none. Nature approves of what is gradual, and loves a decent investment; but she is not fond of mutilated editions.

On the other hand, we are not to suppose that such a world as that of the very best of these dramatists is the best sort of world, or the cheerfullest, and the one to be most desired; much less such a suffocating region of fine heartless ladies and gentlemen as that of Congreve, who, in his passion for wit and a plot, thought of nothing but intrigue and lying, and saying two contrary things at once. It wanted all the poetry of the drama of the preceding ages, and had no fixed belief in any of the philosophy of the future; though the good nature of the better part of it was a kind of substitute for both. The best as well as worst of its women, for instance, are only fit to laugh and to perish. Perpetuity disowns them as thorough capable human creatures, such as Desdemona and Imogen,—ready-made for being finally beautiful and moral, under the best conceivable dispensation: and yet the *Sylvia* and *Mrs. Sullen* of Farquhar have links with even women like these, by the force of their sympathy with whatsoever is kind and just; and Wycherley's *Fidelia* is an imitation of them. But who that is anything but half a man, ignorant of what such whole books as Shakspeare's can make him, would think of taking to his heart the flimsy creatures, made of ribbons and tittle-tattle, out of the rest of the volume before us? or the hoydens, that come driving out of the pantry, and running down the butler? Wycherley was obliged to go to the former times for his new edition of *Viola;* and so was Farquhar for his *Oriana.* And it is not a little curious to see, up to the days of sentimental comedy, what an uncouth tendency there was, whenever a little romance and good faith was to be introduced, to stilt up the dialogue into verse or measured

prose; as though the moment the writers came to anything serious, their own style was felt to be nought, and that of their predecessors the only worthy language of truth and beauty. Vanbrugh himself begins in verse! but is soon obliged to give it up. In fact, English comedy, as it is emphatically understood to be such in these prose dramatists, is the poorer half of the comedy of the preceding age; or the levity and satire of it, deprived of its poetry. Farquhar's "Inconstant," inasmuch as it is a de-poetization of Fletcher's "Wild Goose Chase," is a type of the whole series. It is a mistake however to suppose that its licence began with the prose-writers. Licence in abundance, far worse than the worst of theirs, was in the prosaical part of the spirit of the poets of the time of James the First,—himself one of the most licentious of *prosers;* it was already pulling down their genius from the beautiful, believing heights of Shakspeare; and worthy of reflection is another fact, that it was the prosaical excess of the Puritans in denying to whatsoever they thought wrong the least share of beauty and virtue, and the least right of gladness of heart, that helped to undo every species of belief in the identity of the terms, and when reaction came, render it thoroughly dissolute and misbelieving. Puritanism, the best part of which did as much and as lasting good as the worst part did perishing evil, was preceded (be it observed), as well as followed, by debauchery. Cromwell came between James the First and Charles the Second. The good part of Puritanism reformed the debauchery, but the bad part reproduced it; and if Etherege and Wycherley, by dint of the very levity and gay-heartedness that made them comic writers, had not been better men than the gloomiest of their revilers, a truly infernal business they would have made of the new reaction,—nothing but malignant satire, and a denial of those rights of mirth and laughter, which God has created as well as tears.

This was the mistake of Collier, the non-juring clergyman who came forward to denounce the "wickedness" of the drama. We mean, he assumed that the writers were so many knaves and fiends, who had positively malignant intentions; and in so doing, he was not aware that he betrayed a vice in his own spirit, which if they had thought as ill of it as he did of their licence, would have warranted them in denouncing him as the far greater devil of the two. For to believe in such unmitigated wickedness at all, is itself the worst part of the result of vice; namely, a moral melancholy, and an attribution to the Creator of having made what he never did. It is not necessary at this time of day to enter into the details of this once famous controversy. Collier was a clever, sincere, and vehement but half-witted man, who did good to the stage, inasmuch as he forced the writers to bethink them of decorum, but quite overdid his charges on the score both of intention and commission; and he would have fallen flat in his own fury, if the very weapons of his opponents had not sustained him. Farquhar saw this in his youth, and noticed it in his first publication,—the "Adventures of Covent Garden;"—unless, indeed, his remarks are a report of what was actually said at the club he speaks of.

"Peregrine" (that is himself, whom he elsewhere designates a "stranger,") "goes next evening to the play; where meeting some of his ingenious acquaintance, viz., Mr. W——, Mr. H——, Mr. M——, with others of that club, (perhaps Wycherley,

Hopkins, and Moyle,) there arose a discourse concerning the battel between the church and the stage, with relation to the champions that maintained the parties. The result upon the matter was this,—that Mr. Collier showed too much malice and rancour for a churchman, and his adversaries too little wit for the character of poets; —that their faults transversed would show much better, dullness being familiar with those of Mr. Collier's functions, as malice and ill-nature is more adapted to the profession of wit;—that the best way of answering Mr. Collier, was not to have replied at all; for there was so much fire in his book, had not his adversaries thrown in fuel, it would have fed upon itself, and so gone out in a blaze. As to his respondents, that Captain Va—— (Vanbrugh) wrote too like a gentleman to be esteemed a good casuist; that Mr. C——'s (Congreve's) passion in the business had blinded his reason, which had shone so fair in his other writings; (and) that Mr. Settle wanted the wit of Captain Va—— as much as he did Mr. Settle's gravity."—P. 29.

Vanbrugh said well of Collier, that he made "debauches in his piety, as other men did in their drink." On the other hand, conceive the horror of Collier at seeing Vanbrugh saying in print, that he was really not aware of the indecencies imputed to him, and that he could very well fancy a virtuous woman laying his plays by the side of her Bible. It is difficult to believe that there was not something of the Captain's impudence in this; and yet Bishop Earle, in some verses on the death of Beaumont, compliments him and Fletcher on their total freedom from indecency!—The fact was, that "indecency" in those times meant nothing but the plainest kind of speech; and so common was it, from the sovereign downwards, that it is one of the proofs of the beautifying effect of poetry on the minds of Beaumont and Fletcher, that they abstained from lavishing this species of intensity upon the public. Collier did not suspect that one profession might have its privileged "indecencies" as well as another, and that a clergyman of those times might be solemnly and furiously vicious,—indecent for want of the decorums of charity, and "wicked" for want of charity itself. Yet we have now lived to see, that if the stage at that time was one half licentious, in the other half it was not only innocent of all evil intention, but had a sort of piety in the very gaiety of its trust in nature; while Jeremy Collier, if he was one half of him pious and well-intentioned, was in the other half little better than a violent fool.

And the case will be similar in future ages with regard to ourselves. They will think us perhaps more honest in some things than we suppose we are; but most certainly they will attribute vices, or at least barbarous follies, to us in others, of which we have no conception. There is an instinct in all ages, very natural and pardonable, of thinking the best of existing manners; a consciousness that times and circumstances and the natural progress of events have to do with them, quite as much as ourselves; and that it is not the most pragmatical denouncers, but the most charitable philosophers, that are likeliest to be in the right as to the best way of improving them. A whole age has, at least, as much right to think good-naturedly of itself as a single bigot. It is a phase and variety of social nature; and to think the worst of it, even on that score, is not paying the greatest possible compliment to

the Providence whose cause the bigot impudently takes upon him to advocate with fire and fury, out of the abundance of his bile and vanity. Future ages will be astonished at the "profligacy" of some of our customs, which a theatrical audience not only tolerates, but respects. Yes; and by the same token, many things are done this moment, and thought very little of—nay, reckoned creditable to the wit, and knowledge, and conventional respectability of the doers,—which two hundred years hence will be thought as immoral and ridiculous as we now think the immoralities and absurdities of the days of Charles the Second. And if these or some of them do not immediately present themselves to every intelligent reader's mind, it only shows how far we are gone in them, and how we are blinded in their gulf;—fortunate still if we do but know this,—that times will improve after us, as well as those that have gone before us; and that those will see their own way through error best and cheerfullest, who think the best and kindest of whatsoever nature has done. The two best sermons we ever heard (and no disparagement either to many a good one from the pulpit), were a sentence of Dr. Whichcote's against the multiplication of things forbidden, and the honest, heart-and-soul laugh of Dorothy Jordan.

Upon the spirit in which these dramatists ought to be read, Mr. Lamb has written an essay, exquisite, like all his essays, for the abundance of the thoughts, the unsuperfluousness of the words, and the subtlety of their expression. We venture to differ with one or two points, and shall state why; but it is all so much to the purpose of the present volume, as well as so beautiful in itself, that we shall first transfer the whole of it to our pages, at the expense of their less relishing contents.

ON THE ARTIFICIAL COMEDY OF THE LAST CENTURY.

The artificial Comedy, or Comedy of manners, is quite extinct on our stage. Congreve and Farquhar show their heads once in seven years only, to be exploded and put down instantly. The times cannot bear them. Is it for a few wild speeches, an occasional licence of dialogue? I think not altogether. The business of their dramatic characters will not stand the moral test. We screw everything up to that. Idle gallantry in a fiction, a dream, the passing pageant of an evening, startles us in the same way as the alarming indications of profligacy in a son or ward in real life should startle a parent or guardian. We have no such middle emotions as dramatic interests left. We see a stage libertine playing his loose pranks of two hours' duration, and of no after consequence, with the severe eyes which inspect real vices with their bearings upon two worlds. We are spectators to a plot or intrigue (not reducible in life to the point of strict morality), and take it all for truth. We substitute a real for a dramatic person, and judge him accordingly. We try him in our courts, from which there is no appeal to the *dramatis personæ*, his peers. We have been spoiled with—not sentimental comedy—but a tyrant far more pernicious to our pleasures which has succeeded to it, the exclusive and all-devouring drama of common life; where the moral point is everything; where, instead of the fictitious half-believed personages of the stage (the phantoms of old comedy), we recognise ourselves, our brothers, aunts, kinsfolk, allies, patrons, enemies,—the same as in life,—with an interest in what is going on so hearty and substantial, that we cannot afford our moral judgment, in its deepest and most vital results, to compromise or slumber for a moment. What is *there* transacting, by no modification is made to affect us in any other manner than the same events or characters would do in our relationships of life. We carry our fire-side concerns to the theatre with us. We do not go thither, like our ancestors, to escape from the pressure of reality, so much as to confirm our experience of it; to make assurance double, and take a bond of fate. We must live our toilsome lives twice over, as it was the mournful privilege of Ulysses to descend twice to the shades. All that neutral ground of character,

which stood between vice and virtue; or which in fact was indifferent to neither, where neither properly was called in question; that happy breathing-place from the burthen of a perpetual moral questioning —the sanctuary and quiet Alsatia of hunted casuistry—is broken up and disfranchised, as injurious to the interests of society. The privileges of the place are taken away by law. We dare not dally with images, or names, of wrong. We bark like foolish dogs at shadows. We dread infection from the scenic representation of disorder, and fear a painted pustule. In our anxiety that our morality should not take cold, we wrap it up in a great blanket surtout of precaution against the breeze and sunshine.

I confess for myself that (with no great delinquencies to answer for) I am glad for a season to take an airing beyond the diocese of the strict conscience,—not to live always in the precincts of the law-courts,—but now and then, for a dream-while or so, to imagine a world with no meddling restrictions —to get into recesses, whither the hunter cannot follow me—

——————— Secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
While yet there was no fear of Jove.

I come back to my cage and my restraint the fresher and more healthy for it. I wear my shackles more contentedly for having respired the breath of an imaginary freedom. I do not know how it is with others, but I feel the better always for the perusal of one of Congreve's—nay, why should I not add even of Wycherley's—comedies. I am the gayer at least for it; and I could never connect those sports of a witty fancy in any shape with any result to be drawn from them to imitation in real life. They are a world of themselves almost as much as fairy-land. Take one of their characters, male or female (with few exceptions they are alike), and place it in a modern play, and my virtuous indignation shall rise against the profligate wretch as warmly as the Catos of the pit could desire; because in a modern play I am to judge of the right and the wrong. The standard of *police* is the measure of *political justice*. The atmosphere will blight it, it cannot live here. It has got into a moral world, where it has no business, from which it must needs fall headlong; as dizzy, and incapable of making a stand, as a Swedenborgian bad spirit that has wandered unawares into the sphere of one of his Good Men, or Angels. But in its own world do we feel the creature is so very bad?—The Fainalls and the Mirabels, the Dorimants and the Lady Touchwoods, in their own sphere, do not offend my moral sense; in fact they do not appeal to it at all. They seem engaged in their proper element. They break through no laws, or conscientious restraints. They know of none. They have got out of Christendom into the land of—what shall I call it?—of cuckoldry—the Utopia of gallantry, where pleasure is duty, and the manners perfect freedom. It is altogether a speculative scene of things, which has no reference whatever to the world that is. No good person can be justly offended as a spectator, because no good person suffers on the stage. Judged morally, every character in these plays—the few exceptions only are *mistakes*—is alike essentially vain and worthless. The great art of Congreve is especially shown in this, that he has entirely excluded from his scenes,—some little generosities in the part of *Angelica* perhaps excepted,—not only anything like a faultless character, but any pretensions to goodness or good feelings whatsoever. Whether he did this designedly, or instinctively, the effect is as happy, as the design (if design) was bold. I used to wonder at the strange power which his "Way of the World" in particular possesses of interesting you all along in the pursuits of characters, for whom you absolutely care nothing—for you neither hate nor love his personages—and I think it is owing to this very indifference for any, that you endure the whole. He has spread a privation of moral light, I will call it, rather than by the ugly name of palpable darkness, over his creations; and his shadows flit before you without distinction or preference. Had he introduced a good character, a single gush of moral feeling, a revulsion of the judgment to actual life and actual duties, the impertinent Goshen would have only lighted to the discovery of deformities, which now are none, because we think them none.

Translated into real life, the characters of his, and his friend Wycherley's dramas, are profligates and strumpets,—the business of their brief existence, the undivided pursuit of lawless gallantry. No other spring of action, or possible motive of conduct, is recognised; principles which, universally acted upon, must reduce this frame of things to a chaos. But we do them wrong in so translating them. No such effects are produced in *their* world. When we are among them, we are amongst a chaotic people. We are not to judge them by our usages. No reverend institutions are insulted by their

proceedings—for they have none among them. No peace of families is violated—for no family ties exist among them. No purity of the marriage bed is stained—for none is supposed to have a being. No deep affections are disquieted, no holy wedlock bands are snapped asunder—for affection's depth and wedded faith are not of the growth of that soil. There is neither right nor wrong,—gratitude or its opposite,—claim or duty,—paternity or sonship. Of what consequence is it to Virtue, or how is she at all concerned about it, whether *Sir Simon*, or *Dapperwit*, steal away *Miss Martha;* or who is the father of *Lord Froth's* or *Sir Paul Pliant's* children?

The whole is a passing pageant, where we should sit as unconcerned at the issues, for life or death, as at a battle of the frogs and mice. But, like Don Quixote, we take part against the puppets, and quite as impertinently. We dare not contemplate an Atlantis, a scheme, out of which our coxcombical moral sense is for a little transitory ease excluded. We have not the courage to imagine a state of things for which there is neither reward nor punishment. We cling to the painful necessities of shame and blame. We would indict our very dreams.

Amidst the mortifying circumstances attendant upon growing old, it is something to have seen the "School for Scandal" in its glory. This comedy grew out of Congreve and Wycherley, but gathered some allays of the sentimental comedy which followed theirs. It is impossible that it should be now *acted*, though it continues, at long intervals, to be announced in the bills. Its hero, when Palmer played it at least, was *Joseph Surface*. When I remember the gay boldness, the graceful solemn plausibility, the measured step, the insinuating voice—to express it in a word—the downright *acted* villany of the part, so different from the pressure of conscious actual wickedness,—the hypocritical assumption of hypocrisy,—which made Jack so deservedly a favourite in that character, I must needs conclude the present generation of playgoers more virtuous than myself, or more dense. I freely confess that he divided the palm with me with his better brother; that, in fact, I liked him quite as well. Not but there are passages,—like that, for instance, where *Joseph* is made to refuse a pittance to a poor relation,—incongruities which Sheridan was forced upon by the attempt to join the artificial with the sentimental comedy, either of which must destroy the other—but over these obstructions Jack's manner floated him so lightly, that a refusal from him no more shocked you, than the easy compliance of *Charles* gave you in reality any pleasure; you got over the paltry question as quickly as you could, to get back into the regions of pure comedy, where no cold moral reigns. The highly artificial manner of Palmer in this character counteracted every disagreeable impression which you might have received from the contrast, supposing them real, between the two brothers. You did not believe in *Joseph* with the same faith with which you believed in *Charles*. The latter was a pleasant reality, the former a no less pleasant poetical foil to it. The comedy, I have said, is incongruous; a mixture of Congreve with sentimental incompatibilities: the gaiety upon the whole is buoyant; but it required the consummate art of Palmer to reconcile the discordant elements.

A player with Jack's talents, if we had one now, would not dare to do the part in the same manner. He would instinctively avoid everything which might tend to unrealise, and so to make the character fascinating. He must take his cue from his spectators, who would expect a bad man and a good man as rigidly opposed to each other as the death-beds of those geniuses are contrasted in the prints, which I am sorry to say have disappeared from the windows of my old friend Carrington Bowles, of St. Paul's Church-yard memory—(an exhibition as venerable as the adjacent cathedral, and almost coeval) of the bad and good man at the hour of death; where the ghastly apprehensions of the former,—and truly the grim phantom with his reality of a toasting-fork is not to be despised,—so finely contrast with the meek complacent kissing of the rod,—taking it in like honey and butter,—with which the latter submits to the scythe of the gentle bleeder, Time, who wields his lancet with the apprehensive finger of a popular young ladies' surgeon. What flesh, like loving grass, would not covet to meet half-way the stroke of such a delicate mower?—John Palmer was twice an actor in this exquisite part. He was playing to you all the while that he was playing upon *Sir Peter* and his lady. You had the first intimation of a sentiment before it was on his lips. His altered voice was meant to you, and you were to suppose that his fictitious co-flutterers on the stage perceived nothing at all of it. What was it to you if that half reality, the husband, was overreached by the puppetry—or the thin thing (*Lady Teazle's* reputation) was persuaded it was dying of a plethory? The fortunes of *Othello* and *Desdemona* were not concerned in it. Poor Jack has passed from the stage in good time, that he did not live to this our age of seriousness. The pleasant old *Teazle*, King, too, is gone in good time. His manner

would scarce have passed current in our day. We must love or hate—acquit or condemn—censure or pity—exert our detestable coxcombry of moral judgment upon everything. *Joseph Surface*, to go down now, must be a downright revolting villain—no compromise—his first appearance must shock and give horror—his specious plausibilities, which the pleasurable faculties of our fathers welcomed with such hearty greetings, knowing that no harm (dramatic harm even) could come, or was meant to come, of them, must inspire a cold and killing aversion. *Charles* (the real canting person of the scene—for the hypocrisy of *Joseph* has its ulterior legitimate ends, but his brother's professions of a good heart centre in downright self-satisfaction) must be *loved*, and *Joseph hated*. To balance one disagreeable reality with another, *Sir Peter Teazle* must be no longer the comic idea of a fretful old bachelor bridegroom, whose teasings (while King acted it) were evidently as much played off at you, as they were meant to concern anybody on the stage,—he must be a real person, capable in law of sustaining an injury—a person towards whom duties are to be acknowledged—the genuine crim. con. antagonist of the villainous seducer *Joseph*. To realise him more, his sufferings under his unfortunate match must have the downright pungency of life—must (or should) make you not mirthful but uncomfortable, just as the same predicament would move you in a neighbour or old friend. The delicious scenes which give the play its name and zest, must affect you in the same serious manner as if you heard the reputation of a dear female friend attacked in your real presence. *Crabtree* and *Sir Benjamin*—those poor snakes that live but in the sunshine of your mirth—must be ripened by this hot-bed process of realization, into asps or amphisbænas ; and *Mrs. Candour*—Oh ! frightful !—become a hooded serpent. Oh ! who that remembers Parsons and Dodd—the wasp and butterfly of "The School for Scandal"—in those two characters ; and charming natural Miss Pope, the perfect gentlewoman, as distinguished from the fine lady of comedy, in this latter part—would forego the true scenic delight—the escape from life—the oblivion of consequences—the holiday barring out of the pedant Reflection—those Saturnalia of two or three brief hours, well won from the world—to sit instead at one of our modern plays—to have his coward conscience (that forsooth must not be left for a moment) stimulated with perpetual appeals—dulled rather, and blunted, as a faculty without repose must be—and his moral vanity pampered with images of notional justice, notional beneficence, lives saved without the spectators' risk, and fortunes given away that cost the author nothing ?

No piece was, perhaps, ever so completely cast in all its parts as this *manager's comedy*. Miss Farren had succeeded to Mrs. Abington in *Lady Teazle ;* and Smith, the original *Charles*, had retired when I first saw it. The rest of the characters, with very slight exceptions, remained. I remember it was then the fashion to cry down John Kemble, who took the part of *Charles* after Smith ; but, I thought, very unjustly. Smith, I fancy, was more airy, and took the eye with a certain gaiety of person. He brought with him no sombre recollections of tragedy. He had not to expiate the fault of having pleased beforehand in lofty declamation. He had no sins of *Hamlet* or of *Richard* to atone for. His failure in these parts was a passport to success in one of so opposite a tendency. But, as far as I could judge, the weighty sense of Kemble made up for more personal incapacity than he had to answer for. His harshest tones in this part came steeped and dulcified in good-humour. He made his defects a grace. His exact declamatory manner, as he managed it, only served to convey the points of his dialogue with more precision. It seemed to head the shafts to carry them deeper. Not one of his sparkling sentences was lost. I remember minutely how he delivered each in succession, and cannot by any effort imagine how any of them could be altered for the better. No man could deliver brilliant dialogue—the dialogue of Congreve or of Wycherley—because none understood it—half so well as John Kemble. His *Valentine*, in "Love for Love," was, to my recollection, faultless. He flagged sometimes in the intervals of tragic passion. He would slumber over the level parts of an heroic character. His *Macbeth* has been known to nod. But he always seemed to me to be particularly alive to pointed and witty dialogue. The relaxing levities of tragedy have not been touched by any since him—the playful court-bred spirit in which he condescended to the players in "Hamlet"—the sportive relief which he threw into the darker shades of *Richard*—disappeared with him. He had his sluggish moods, his torpors—but they were the halting-stones and resting-place of his tragedy—politic savings and fetches of the breath—husbandry of the lungs, where nature pointed him to be an economist—rather, I think, than errors of the judgment. They were, at worst, less painful than the eternal tormenting unappeasable vigilance,—the "lidless dragon eyes," of present fashionable tragedy.

Exquisite as every word here is, (a style pickled and preserved out of the delicatest rarities of the brain,) and well calculated as it is to "give pause" to another writer of any modesty, we confess we cannot agree with the main point of it, any more than with some of the judgments about the actors. The main *object* we heartily agree with; namely, the vindication of the writers from the wholesale charges made against them by some feeble people, of immorality and perniciousness. Equally profound and good-natured is Mr. Lamb in whatever he says at all times on the like subjects, as far as regards general spirit and tendency, however we may differ with him as to the conclusions he sometimes draws respecting a fact of time and place. And we confess we think him mistaken both as to the entire fancifulness of the states of society described by Congreve and others, and to the supposition that the sort of critical spirit he objects to is peculiar to the present day, or indeed existing to the full extent of that peculiarity at any time. Mr. Lamb, though a wide and subtle observer, was a sequestered liver. He was also one of an ultra-sensitive temperament, and so anxious to believe the best of everything, on more scores even than such as were healthy, that admitting as he did the utility and even joviality of some graver-looking perplexities in morals, which he was unable to be blind to, yet whenever he could not find what he thought a healthy or harmonious final reason for anything that was not so exactly within the limits of his experience, he was inclined either to doubt it altogether, or, for want of personal sympathy with the gaiety and robustness mixed up with it, and its possible convertibility into something better, to write as if he did. Perhaps he thought (surely not out of any presumption, but because his wisdom was of the best and most child-like sort itself,) that he could even play his readers a child's trick, and persuade them that Congreve's fine ladies and gentlemen, and the rakes of Vanbrugh and Farquhar, were doing nothing but "making as if." Most assuredly he was mistaken; and yet, with as equal certainty, most assuredly he need not have cared if he was. Nor would he, had the fact pressed itself upon him; even though he was without the additional comfort of such moralists as see a constant working and progression of society towards improvement. He could reconcile himself, some way or other, to anything which nature in her energies brought about, or chose to go through. He hated to object to anything, except to objection; and to that too, when however passionate, it had a generosity and a health in it. But his idiosyncrasies, and the possibilities of knowledge consequent upon them, were confined, though his heart was not; and even what he knew, he would not always choose to remember. Thus he speaks of a pedantic morality which finds nothing but evil in these plays, and which he represents as having come up in our own didactic times, and no longer enabling such plays to be acted. But every age has had a measure of the same kind of criticism, with regard to the one that preceded it. Shakspeare's Jew, Shylock, properly displaced (according to Mr. Lamb himself) the more malignant Jew of Marlowe. He does not complain that the age had found out the moral objection to the latter, or that a morality, no longer pedantic, made progression through the less inhuman nature of Shylock. Thus Dryden, who saw nothing to blame in Etherege, denounced the indecencies of Beaumont and Fletcher; while Steele, who recommended

Congreve, thought Etherege not to be endured. Neither is it a fact that the comedies of the last age are no longer played or enjoyed. Whenever an actor comes up who is equal to them,—such as Mr. Farren, for instance,—they are always played and enjoyed; nor do the present audiences of Covent Garden object to them in the least, in the spirit of a pedantic morality. A critic here and there may do so; but it is neither the feeling of the press in general, nor of the play-going public; and if Congreve would not be liked now, neither was he in his own times, for what would now get him condemned. "Love for Love" is always liked when players can be got for it: so was the "Old Bachelor," as far as Munden was concerned, even though astrology is gone out; but the villainous and tragical vices of some of the other of Congreve's plays hurt them in his own day, and were the cause in fact why he quitted the stage. In a word, there is more sympathy with real gaiety and spirits at all times, and greater instinctive allowance for the free drawing of nature and its healthy tendencies, than Mr. Lamb in this instance supposed; and unless there is a still more delicate inner doctrine in his essay than we seem warranted in supposing from some of the peremptory and final terms in it, we must believe it to be as unfounded in some conclusions, as it is admirable in every other respect, and useful for the enlargement of the understanding. Perhaps, after all, he intended nothing very different from what we do ourselves, though he took a different road for suggesting it. Certainly he intended nothing less innocent,—nor more so.

We cannot help thinking that Mr. Hazlitt's almost equally admirable essay on these writers (almost in point of style, and superior in hearty relish), leaves the far truer impression respecting them, as well as contains the best and most detailed criticism on their individual plays. We did not read either of these essays over again, till we had concluded our own remarks (for what we have here said of both is an insertion); but as we thought it would be an injustice to the reader to withhold from him what he has just seen, so we hold that it would be a still greater not to give him the benefit of the masterly criticism of Mr. Hazlitt. After we had again become acquainted with them, we found reason, generally speaking, to think nothing of our own, except inasmuch as we observed a prevailing similarity of opinion. Nor may the reader be sorry to hear a third lover of the drama speak on a subject so agreeable. What we hold ourselves to have contributed to this volume is a more pains-taking set of memoirs than, we believe, has yet appeared. Mr. Hazlitt's essay will complete, amplify, and abundantly enrich the criticism; and Mr. Lamb's will carry to its height a speculation more exquisitely artificial than its subject, and advantageous, some way or other, to all parties. But Mr. Hazlitt, it is to be observed, has none of the misgivings of Mr. Lamb. He does not even think it necessary to notice them. He takes the whole tribe, as nature and society (short of the exaggerations of art) threw them forward during the progress of civilization, neither doubting their reality, nor startled at it, nor forced to reconcile himself to the robustness of its levity. At all events, the reader in these additions to our prefatory matter will hear the opinions of two out of the three great critics whom we not long ago had among us. (Ah, Coleridge! and art thou gone away into an infinitude hardly wider than thy thoughts! Ah, dear Hazlitt and

Lamb, old tea-drinking friends and teachers! must he that writes this—learn no more from you, in voice, as well as in mute books? Is it true, as sometimes he can hardly think it is—that neither of you is again coming down the street to his door, nor he to yours? and that he even can write a little better poetry than he did, and you not be alive to turn these tears in his eyes to pride instead of sorrow?)

This is no. IV of Hazlitt's 'Lectures on the English Comic Writers'.

ON WYCHERLEY, CONGREVE, VANBRUGH, AND FARQUHAR.

Comedy is a "graceful ornament to the civil order; the Corinthian capital of polished society." Like the mirrors which have been added to the sides of one of our theatres, it reflects the images of grace, of gaiety, and pleasure double, and completes the perspective of human life. To read a good comedy is to keep the best company in the world, where the best things are said, and the most amusing happen. The wittiest remarks are always ready on the tongue, and the luckiest occasions are always at hand to give birth to the happiest conceptions. Sense makes strange havoc of nonsense. Refinement acts as a foil to affectation, and affectation to ignorance. Sentence after sentence tells. We don't know which to admire most; the observation, or the answer to it. We would give our fingers to be able to talk so ourselves, or to hear others talk so. In turning over the pages of the best comedies, we are almost transported to another world, and escape from this dull age to one that was all life, and whim, and mirth, and humour. The curtain rises, and a gayer scene presents itself, as on the canvas of Watteau. We are admitted behind the scenes like spectators at court, on a levee or birth-day; but it is the court, the gala-day of wit and pleasure, of gallantry and Charles II.! What an air breathes from the name! what a rustling of silks and waving of plumes! what a sparkling of diamond ear-rings and shoe-buckles! What bright eyes, (ah, those were Waller's Sacharissa's as she passed!) what killing looks and graceful emotions! How the faces of the whole ring are dressed in smiles! how the repartee goes round! how wit and folly, elegance and awkward imitation of it, set one another off! Happy, thoughtless age, when kings and nobles led purely ornamental lives; when the utmost stretch of a morning's study went no farther than the choice of a sword-knot, or the adjustment of a side-curl; when the soul spoke out in all the pleasing eloquence of dress; and beaux and belles, enamoured of themselves in one another's follies, fluttered like gilded butterflies, in giddy mazes, through the walks of St. James's Park!

The four principal writers of this style of comedy (which I think the best) are undoubtedly Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar. The dawn was in Etherege, as its latest close was in Sheridan.—It is hard to say which of these four is best, or in what each of them excels, they had so many and such great excellences.

Congreve is the most distinct from the others, and the most easily defined, both from what he possessed, and from what he wanted. He had by far the most wit and elegance, with less of other things, of humour, character, incident, &c. His style is inimitable, nay perfect. It is the highest model of comic dialogue. Every sentence is replete with sense and satire, conveyed in the most polished and pointed terms. Every page presents a shower of brilliant conceits, is a tissue of epigrams in prose, is a new triumph of wit, a new conquest over dulness. The fire of artful raillery is nowhere else so well kept up. This style, which he was almost the first to introduce, and which he carried to the utmost pitch of classical refinement, reminds one exactly of Collins's description of wit as opposed to humour,

> "Whose jewels in his crisped hair
> Are placed each other's light to share."

Sheridan will not bear a comparison with him in the regular antithetical construction of his sentences, and in the mechanical artifices of his style, though so much later, and though style in general has been so much studied, and in the mechanical part so much improved since then. It bears every mark of being what he himself in the dedication of one of his plays tells us that it was, a spirited copy taken off and carefully revised from the most select society of his time, exhibiting all the sprightliness, ease,

and animation of familiar conversation, with the correctness and delicacy of the most finished composition. His works are a singular treat to those who have cultivated a taste for the niceties of English style: there is a peculiar flavour in the very words, which is to be found in hardly any other writer. To the mere reader his writings would be an irreparable loss: to the stage they are already become a dead letter, with the exception of one of them,—"Love for Love." This play is as full of character, incident, and stage-effect, as almost any of those of his contemporaries, and fuller of wit than any of his own, except perhaps "The Way of the World." It still acts, and is still acted well. The effect of it is prodigious on the well-informed spectator. In particular, Munden's *Foresight*, if it is not just the thing, is a wonderfully rich and powerful piece of comic acting. His look is planet-struck; his dress and appearance like one of the signs of the zodiac taken down. Nothing can be more bewildered; and it only wants a little more helplessness, a little more of the doting querulous garrulity of age, to be all that one conceives of the superannuated, star-gazing original. The gay, unconcerned opening of this play, and the romantic generosity of the conclusion, where Valentine, when about to resign his mistress, declares—"I never valued fortune, but as it was subservient to my pleasure; and my only pleasure was to please this lady,"—are alike admirable. The peremptory bluntness and exaggerated description of *Sir Sampson Legend* are in a vein truly oriental, with a Shakspearian cast of language, and form a striking contrast to the quaint credulity and senseless superstitions of *Foresight*. The remonstrance of his son to him, "to divest him, along with his inheritance, of his reason, thoughts, passions, inclinations, affections, appetites, senses, and the huge train of attendants which he brought into the world with him," with his valet's accompanying comments, is one of the most eloquent and spirited specimens of wit, pathos, and morality, that is to be found. The short scene with *Trapland*, the money-broker, is of the first water. What a picture is here drawn of *Tattle!* "More misfortunes, sir!" says *Jeremy*. *Valentine:* "What, another dun? *Jeremy:* "No, sir; but *Mr. Tattle* is come to wait upon you." What an introduction to give of an honest gentleman in the shape of a misfortune! The scenes between him, *Miss Prue*, and *Ben*, are of a highly-coloured description. *Mrs. Frail* and *Mrs. Foresight* are "sisters every way;" and the bodkin which *Mrs. Foresight* brings as a proof of her sister's levity of conduct, and which is so convincingly turned against her as a demonstration of her own—"Nay, if you come to that, where did you find that bodkin?"—is one of the trophies of the moral justice of the comic drama. "The Old Bachelor" and "Double Dealer" are inferior to "Love for Love," but one is never tired of reading them. The fault of the last is, that *Lady Touchwood* approaches, in the turbulent impetuosity of her character and measured tone of her declamation, too near to the tragedy-queen; and that *Maskwell's* plots puzzle the brain by their intricacy, as they stagger our belief by their gratuitous villany. *Sir Paul* and *Lady Pliant*, and my *Lord* and *Lady Froth*, are also scarcely credible in the extravagant insipidity and romantic vein of their follies, in which they are notably seconded by the lively *Mr. Brisk* and "dying *Ned Careless*."

"The Way of the World" was the author's last and most carefully-finished performance. It is an essence almost too fine; and the sense of pleasure evaporates in an aspiration after something that seems too exquisite ever to have been realised. After inhaling the spirit of Congreve's wit, and tasting "love's thrice reputed nectar" in his works, the head grows giddy in turning from the highest point of rapture to the ordinary business of life; and we can with difficulty recall the truant Fancy to those objects which we are fain to take up with here, *for better, for worse*. What can be more enchanting than *Millamant* and her morning thoughts, her *doux sommeils?* What more provoking than her reproach to her lover, who proposes to rise early, "Ah! idle creature!" The meeting of these two lovers after the abrupt dismissal of *Sir Wilful* is the height of careless and voluptuous elegance, as if they moved in air, and drank a finer spirit of humanity.

"*Millamant.* Like Phœbus sung the no less amorous boy.
Mirabell. Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy."

Millamant is the perfect model of the accomplished fine lady:

"Come, then, the colours and the ground prepare,
Dip in the rainbow, trick her off in air;
Choose a firm cloud, before it falls, and in it
Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of a minute."

She is the ideal heroine of the comedy of high life, who arrives at the height of indifference to everything from the height of satisfaction; to whom pleasure is as familiar as the air she draws; elegance worn as a part of her dress; wit the habitual language which she hears and speaks; love, a matter of course; and who has nothing to hope or to fear, her own caprice being the only law to herself, and rule to those about her. Her words seem composed of amorous sighs—her looks are glanced at prostrate admirers or envious rivals.

> "If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
> That heart that others bleed for, bleed for me."

She refines on her pleasures to satiety; and is almost stifled in the incense that is offered to her person, her wit, her beauty, and her fortune. Secure of triumph, her slaves tremble at her frown; her charms are so irresistible, that her conquests give her neither surprise nor concern. "Beauty the lover's gift?" she exclaims, in answer to *Mirabell*—"Dear me, what is a lover that it can give? Why one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases; and then if one pleases, one makes more." We are not sorry to see her tamed down at last, from her pride of love and beauty, into a wife. She is good-natured and generous, with all her temptations to the contrary; and her behaviour to *Mirabell* reconciles us to her treatment of *Witwoud* and *Petulant*, and of her country admirer, *Sir Wilful*.

Congreve has described all this in his character of *Millamant*, but he has done no more; and if he had, he would have done wrong. He has given us the finest idea of an artificial character of this kind; but it is still the reflection of an artificial character. The springs of nature, passion, or imagination—are but feebly touched. The impressions appealed to, and with masterly address, are habitual, external, and conventional advantages: the ideas of birth, of fortune, of connexions, of dress, accomplishment, fashion, the opinion of the world, of crowds of admirers, continually come into play, flatter our vanity, bribe our interest, soothe our indolence, fall in with our prejudices;—it is these that support the goddess of our idolatry, with which she is everything, and without which she would be nothing. The mere fine lady of comedy, compared with the heroine of romance or poetry, when stripped of her adventitious ornaments and advantages, is too much like the doll stripped of its finery. In thinking of *Millamant*, we think almost as much of her dress as of her person: it is not so with respect to *Rosalind* or *Perdita*. The poet has painted them differently; in colours which "nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on," with health, with innocence, with gaiety, "wild wit, invention ever new;" with pure red and white, like the wilding's blossoms; with warbled wood-notes, like the feathered choir's; with thoughts fluttering on the wings of imagination, and hearts panting and breathless with eager delight. The interest we feel is in themselves; the admiration they excite is for themselves. They do not depend upon the drapery of circumstances. It is nature that "blazons herself" in them. *Imogen* is the same in a lonely cave as in a court; nay more, for she there seems something heavenly—a spirit or a vision; and, as it were, shames her destiny, brighter for the foil of circumstances. *Millamant* is nothing but a fine lady; and all her airs and affectation would be blown away with the first breath of misfortune. Enviable in drawing-rooms, adorable at her toilette, fashion, like a witch, has thrown its spell around her; but if that spell were broken, her power of fascination would be gone. For that reason I think the character better adapted for the stage: it is more artificial, more theatrical, more meretricious. I would rather have seen Mrs. Abington's *Millamant*, than any *Rosalind* that ever appeared on the stage. Some how, this sort of acquired elegance is more a thing of costume, of air and manner; and in comedy, or on the comic stage, the light and familiar, the trifling, superficial, and agreeable, bears, perhaps, rightful sway over that which touches the affections, or exhausts the fancy.—There is a callousness in the worst characters in the "Way of the World," in *Fainall*, and his wife and *Mrs. Marwood*, not very pleasant; and a grossness in the absurd ones, such as *Lady Wishfort* and *Sir Wilful*, which is not a little amusing. *Witwoud* wishes to disclaim, as far as he can, his relationship to this last character, and says, "he's but his half brother;" to which *Mirabell* makes answer—"Then, perhaps, he's but half a fool." *Peg* is an admirable caricature of rustic awkwardness and simplicity, which is carried to excess without any offence, from a sense of contrast to the refinement of the chief characters in the play. The description of *Lady Wishfort's* face is a perfect piece of painting. The force of style in this author at times amounts to poetry. *Waitwell*, who personates *Sir Rowland*, and *Foible*, his accomplice in the matrimonial scheme upon her mistress, hang as a dead weight upon the

plot. They are mere tools in the hands of *Mirabell*, and want life and interest. Congreve's characters can all of them speak well, they are mere machines when they come to act. Our author's superiority deserted him almost entirely with his wit. His serious and tragic poetry is frigid and jejune to an unaccountable degree. His *forte* was the description of actual manners, whether elegant or absurd; and when he could not deride the one or embellish the other, his attempts at romantic passion or imaginary enthusiasm are forced, abortive, and ridiculous, or common-place. The description of the ruins of a temple in the beginning of the "Mourning Bride," was a great stretch of his poetic genius. It has, however, been over-rated, particularly by Dr. Johnson, who could have done nearly as well himself for a single passage in the same style of moralising and sentimental description. To justify this general censure, and to show how the lightest and most graceful wit degenerates into the heaviest and most bombastic poetry, I will give one description out of his tragedy, which will be enough. It is the speech which *Gonsalez* addresses to *Almeria:*

"Be every day of your long life like this.
The sun, bright conquest, and your brighter eyes
Have all conspired to blaze promiscuous light,
And bless this day with most unequal lustre.
Your royal father, my victorious lord,
Loaden with spoils, and ever-living laurel,
Is entering now, in martial pomp, the palace.
Five hundred mules precede his solemn march,
Which groan beneath the weight of Moorish wealth.
Chariots of war, adorn'd with glittering gems,
Succeed; and next, a hundred neighing steeds,
White as the fleecy rain on Alpine hills;
That bound, and foam, and champ the golden bit,
As they disdain'd the victory they grace.
Prisoners of war in shining fetters follow:
And captains of the noblest blood of Afric
Sweat by his chariot-wheels, and lick and grind,
With gnashing teeth, the dust his triumphs raise.
The swarming populace spread every wall,
And cling, as if with claws they did enforce
Their hold, through clifted stones stretching and staring
As if they were all eyes, and every limb
Would feed its faculty of admiration,
While you alone retire, and shun this sight;
This sight, which is indeed not seen (though twice
The multitude should gaze) in absence of your eyes."

This passage seems, in part, an imitation of Bolingbroke's entry into London. The style is as different from Shakspeare, as it is from that of *Witwoud* and *Petulant*. It is plain that the imagination of the author could not raise itself above the burlesque. His Mask of Semele, Judgment of Paris, and other occasional poems, are even worse. I would not advise any one to read them, or if I did, they would not. Wycherley was before Congreve; and his "Country Wife" will last longer than anything of Congreve's as a popular acting play. It is only a pity that it is not entirely his own; but it is enough so to do him never-ceasing honour, for the best things are his own. His humour is, in general, broader, his characters more natural, and his incidents more striking, than Congreve's. It may be said of Congreve, that the workmanship overlays the materials: in Wycherley, the casting of the parts and the fable are alone sufficient to ensure success. We forget Congreve's characters, and only remember what they say: we remember Wycherley's characters, and the incidents they meet with, just as if they were real, and forget what they say, comparatively speaking. *Miss Peggy* (or *Mrs. Margery Pinchwife*) is a character that will last for ever, I should hope; and even when the original is no more, if that should ever be, while self-will, curiosity, art, and ignorance are to be found in the same person, it will be just

as good and as intelligible as ever in the description, because it is built on first principles, and brought out in the fullest and broadest manner. *Agnes*, in Molière's play, has a great deal of the same unconscious impulse and heedless *naïveté*, but hers is sentimentalised and varnished over (in the French fashion) with long-winded apologies and analytical distinctions. It wants the same simple force and *home* truth. It is not so direct and downright. *Miss Peggy* is not even a novice in casuistry: she blurts out her meaning before she knows what she is saying, and she speaks her mind by her actions oftener than by her words. The outline of the plot is the same; but the point-blank hits and master-strokes, the sudden thoughts and delightful expedients, such as her changing the letters, the meeting her husband plump in the Park as she is running away from him as fast as her heels can carry her, her being turned out of doors by her jealous booby of a husband, and sent by him to her lover disguised as *Alicia*, her sister-in-law—occur first in the modern play. There are scarcely any incidents or situations on the stage, which tell like these for pantomimic effect, which give such tingling to the blood, or so completely take away the breath with expectation and surprise. *Miss Prue*, in "Love for Love," is a lively reflection of *Miss Peggy*, but without the bottom and weight of metal. *Hoyden* is a match for her in constitution and complete effect, as *Corinna*, in the "Confederacy," is in mischief, but without the wit. Mrs. Jordan used to play all these characters; and as she played them, it was hard to know which was best. *Pinchwife*, or *Moody*, (as he is at present called) is, like others of Wycherley's moral characters, too rustic, abrupt, and cynical. He is a more disagreeable, but less tedious character than the husband of *Agnes*, and both seem, by all accounts, to have been rightly served. The character of *Sparkish* is quite new, and admirably hit off. He is an exquisite and suffocating coxcomb; a pretender to wit and letters, without common understanding, or the use of his senses. The class of character is thoroughly exposed and understood; but he persists in his absurd conduct so far, that it becomes extravagant and disgusting, if not incredible, from mere weakness and foppery. Yet there is something in him that we are inclined to tolerate at first, as his professing that "with him a wit is the first title to respect;" and we regard his unwillingness to be pushed out of the room, and coming back, in spite of their teeth, to keep the company of wits and raillers, as a favourable omen. But he utterly disgraces his pretensions before he has done. With all his faults and absurdities, he is, however, a much less offensive character than *Tattle*.—*Horner* is a stretch of probability in the first concoction of that ambiguous character (for he does not appear at present on the stage as Wycherley made him); but notwithstanding the indecency and indirectness of the means he employs to carry his plans into effect, he deserves every sort of consideration and forgiveness, both for the display of his own ingenuity, and the deep insight he discovers into human nature—such as it was in the time of Wycherley. The author has commented on this character, and the double meaning of the name in his "Plain Dealer," borrowing the remarks, and almost the very words of Molière, who has brought forward and defended his own work against the objections of the precise part of his audience, in his *Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*. There is no great harm in these occasional plagiarisms, except that they make one uncomfortable at other times, and distrustful of the originality of the whole.—"The Plain Dealer" is Wycherley's next best work; and is a most severe and poignant moral satire. There is a heaviness about it, indeed, an extravagance, an overdoing both in the style, the plot, and characters; but the truth of feeling and the force of interest prevail over every objection. The character of *Manly*, the *Plain Dealer*, is violent, repulsive, and uncouth, which is a fault, though one that seems to have been intended for the sake of contrast; for the portrait of consummate, artful hypocrisy in *Olivia*, is, perhaps, rendered more striking by it. The indignation excited against this odious and pernicious quality by the masterly exposure to which it is here subjected, is "a discipline of humanity." No one can read this play attentively without being the better for it as long as he lives. It penetrates to the core; it shows the immorality and hateful effects of duplicity, by showing it fixing its harpy fangs in the heart of an honest and worthy man. It is worth ten volumes of sermons. The scenes between *Manly* after his return, *Olivia*, *Plausible*, and *Novel*, are instructive examples of unblushing impudence, of shallow pretensions to principle, and of the most mortifying reflections on his own situation, and bitter sense of female injustice and ingratitude, on the part of *Manly*. The devil of hypocrisy and hardened assurance seems worked up to the highest pitch of conceivable effrontery in *Olivia*, when, after confiding to her cousin the story of her infamy, she, in a moment, turns round upon her for some sudden purpose, and affecting not to know the meaning of the other's allusions to what she has just told her, reproaches her with forging insinuations to the prejudice of her character, and in violation of their friendship. "Go! you're a censorious ill woman." This is more trying to the

patience than anything in the Tartuffe. The name of this heroine, and her overtures to *Fidelia*, as the page, seem to have been suggested by "Twelfth Night." It is curious to see how the same subject is treated by two such different authors as Shakspeare and Wycherley. The widow *Blackacre* and her son are like her lawsuit—everlasting. A more lively, palpable, bustling, ridiculous picture cannot be drawn. *Jerry* is a hopeful lad, though undutiful, and gets out of bad hands into worse. Goldsmith evidently had an eye to these two precious characters, in "She Stoops to Conquer." *Tony Lumpkin* and his mother are of the same family, and the incident of the theft of the casket of jewels, and the bag of parchments, is nearly the same in both authors. Wycherley's other plays are not so good. "The Gentleman Dancing Master" is a long, foolish farce, in the exaggerated manner of Molière, but without his spirit or whimsical invention. "Love in a Wood," though not what one would wish it to be for the author's sake or our own, is much better, and abounds in several rich and highly-coloured scenes, particularly those in which *Miss Lucy*, her mother *Crossbite, Dapperwit*, and *Alderman Gripe*, are concerned. Some of the subordinate characters and intrigues in this comedy are grievously spun out. Wycherley, when he got hold of a good thing, or sometimes even of a bad one, was determined to make the most of it; and might have said with *Dogberry*, truly enough, "Had I the tediousness of a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all upon your worships." In reading this author's best works, those which one reads most frequently over, and knows almost by heart, one cannot help thinking of the treatment he received from Pope about his verses. It was hardly excusable in a boy of sixteen to an old man of seventy.

Vanbrugh comes next, and holds his own fully with the best. He is no writer at all, as to mere authorship; but he makes up for it by a prodigious fund of comic invention and ludicrous description, bordering somewhat on caricature. Though he did not borrow from him, he was much more like Molière in genius than Wycherley was, who professedly imitated him. He has none of Congreve's graceful refinement, and as little of Wycherley's serious manner and studied insight into the springs of character; but his exhibition of it in dramatic contrast and unlooked-for situations, where the different parties play upon one another's failings, and into one another's hands, keeping up the jest like a game at battledore and shuttlecock, and urging it to the utmost verge of breathless extravagance, in the mere eagerness of the fray, is beyond that of any other of our writers. His fable is not so profoundly laid, nor his characters so well digested as Wycherley's (who, in these respects, bore some resemblance to Fielding). Vanbrugh does not lay the same deliberate train from the outset to the conclusion, so that the whole may hang together, and tend inevitably from the combination of different agents and circumstances to the same decisive point: but he works out scene after scene, on the spur of the occasion, and from the immediate hold they take of his imagination at the moment, without any previous bias or ultimate purpose, much more powerfully, with more *verve*, and in a richer vein of original invention. His fancy warms and burnishes out as if he were engaged in the real scene of action, and felt all his faculties suddenly called forth to meet the emergency. He has more nature than art: what he does best, he does because he cannot help it. He has a masterly eye to the advantages which certain accidental situations of character present to him on the spot, and he executes the most difficult and rapid theatrical movements at a moment's warning. Of this kind are the inimitable scenes in the "Provoked Wife," between *Razor* and *Mademoiselle*, where they repeat and act over again the rencontre in the Mulberry-walk between *Constant* and his mistress, than which nothing was ever more happily conceived, or done to more absolute perfection; that again in the "Relapse," where *Loveless* pushes *Berinthia* into the closet; the sudden meeting in the "Confederacy" between *Dick* and *Mrs. Amlet;* the altercation about the letter between *Flippanta* and *Corinna*, in the same play; and that again where *Brass*, at the house of *Gripe* the money-scrivener, threatens to discover his friend and accomplice, and by talking louder and louder to him, as he tries to evade his demands, extorts a grudging submission from him. This last scene is as follows:—

"*Dick*. I wish my old hobbling mother han't been blabbering something here she should not do.
Brass. Fear nothing, all's safe on that side yet. But how speaks young mistress's epistle? soft and tender?
Dick. As pen can write.
Brass. So you think all goes well there?
Dick. As my heart can wish.
Brass. You are sure on't?

Dick. Sure on't.

Brass. Why then, ceremony aside—[*Putting on his hat*]—you and I must have a little talk, Mr. Amlet.

Dick. Ah, Brass, what art thou going to do? wo't ruin me?

Brass. Look you, Dick, few words; you are in a smooth way of making your fortune; I hope all will roll on. But how do you intend matters shall pass 'twixt you and me in this business?

Dick. Death and furies! What a time dost take to talk on't?

Brass. Good words, or I betray you; they have already heard of one Mr. Amlet in the house.

Dick. Here's a son of a whore. [*Aside*.

Brass. In short, look smooth, and be a good prince. I am your valet, 'tis true: your footman, sometimes, which I'm enraged at; but you have always had the ascendant, I confess: when we were schoolfellows, you made me carry your books, make your exercise, own your rogueries, and sometimes take a whipping for you. When we were fellow-'prentices, though I was your senior, you made me open the shop, clean my master's shoes, cut last at dinner, and eat all the crust. In our sins too, I must own you still kept me under; you soared up to adultery with the mistress, while I was at humble fornication with the maid. Nay, in our punishments you still made good your post; for when once upon a time I was sentenced but to be whipped, I cannot deny but you were condemned to be hanged. So that in all things, I must confess, your inclinations have been greater and nobler than mine; however, I cannot consent that you should at once fix fortune for life, and I dwell in my humilities for the rest of my days.

Dick. Hark thee, Brass, if I do not most nobly by thee, I'm a dog.

Brass. And when?

Dick. As soon as ever I am married.

Brass. Ay, the plague take thee.

Dick. Then you mistrust me?

Brass. I do, by my faith. Look you, sir, some folks we mistrust, because we don't know them: others we mistrust, because we do know them: and for one of these reasons I desire there may be a bargain beforehand: if not—(*raising his voice*)—look ye, Dick Amlet—

Dick. Soft, my dear friend and companion. The dog will ruin me—[*Aside*]. Say, what is't will content thee?

Brass. O ho!

Dick. But how canst thou be such a barbarian?

Brass. I learnt it at Algiers.

Dick. Come, make thy Turkish demand then.

Brass. You know you gave me a bank-bill this morning to receive for you.

Dick. I did so, of fifty pounds; 'tis thine. So, now thou art satisfied; all is fixed.

Brass. It is not indeed. There's a diamond necklace you robbed your mother of e'en now.

Dick. Ah, you Jew!

Brass. No words.

Dick. My dear Brass!

Brass. I insist.

Dick. My old friend!

Brass. Dick Amlet—(*raising his voice*)—I insist.

Dick. Ah, the cormorant—[*Aside*]. Well, 'tis thine: thou'lt never thrive with it.

Brass. When I find it begins to do me mischief, I'll give it you again. But I must have a wedding suit.

Dick. Well.

Brass. A stock of linen.

Dick. Enough.

Brass. Not yet—a silver-hilted sword.

Dick. Well, thou shalt have that too. Now thou hast everything.

Brass. Heaven forgive me, I forgot a ring of remembrance. I would not forget all these favours for the world: a sparkling diamond will be always playing in my eye, and put me in mind of them.

Dick. This unconscionable rogue!—[*Aside*.] Well, I'll bespeak one for thee.

Brass. Brilliant.

Dick. It shall. But if the thing don't succeed after all—

Brass. I am a man of honour and restore: and so, the treaty being finished, I strike my flag of defiance, and fall into my respects again." [*Takes off his hat*.

The "Confederacy" is a comedy of infinite contrivance and intrigue, with a matchless spirit of impudence. It is a fine careless *exposé* of heartless want of principle; for there is no anger or severity against vice expressed in it, as in Wycherley. The author's morality in all cases (except his "Provoked Wife," which was undertaken as a penance for past peccadilloes) sits very loose upon him. It is a little upon the turn; "it does somewhat smack." Old Palmer, as *Dick Amlet*, asking his mother's blessing on his knee, was the very idea of a graceless son.—His sweetheart *Corinna* is a *Miss Prue*, but nature works in her more powerfully.—*Lord Foppington*, in the "Relapse," is a most splendid caricature: he is a personification of the foppery and folly of dress and external appearance in full feather. He blazes out and dazzles sober reason with ridiculous ostentation. Still I think this character is a copy from Etherege's *Sir Fopling Flutter*, and upon the whole, perhaps, *Sir Fopling* is the more natural grotesque of the two. His soul is more in his dress; he is a more disinterested coxcomb. The lord is an ostentatious, strutting, vain-glorious blockhead; the knight is an unaffected, self-complacent, serious admirer of his equipage and person. For instance, what they severally say on the subject of contemplating themselves in the glass, is a proof of this. *Sir Fopling* thinks a looking-glass in the room "the best company in the world;" it is another self to him: *Lord Foppington* merely considers it as necessary to adjust his appearance, that he may make a figure in company. The finery of the one has an imposing air of grandeur about it, and is studied for effect: the other is really in love with a laced suit, and is hand and glove with the newest-cut fashion. He really thinks his tailor or peruke-maker the greatest man in the world, while his lordship treats them familiarly as necessary appendages of his person. Still this coxcomb-nobleman's effeminacy and mock-heroic vanity are admirably depicted and held up to unrivalled ridicule; and his courtship of *Miss Hoyden* is excellent in all its stages, and ends oracularly.

Lord Foppington.—"Now, for my part, I think the wisest thing a man can do with an aching heart, is to put on a serene countenance; for a philosophical air is the most becoming thing in the world to the face of a person of quality: I will therefore bear my disgrace like a great man, and let the people see I am above an affront.—[*Then turning to his brother.*] Dear Tam, since things are thus fallen out, pr'ythee give me leave to wish thee joy: I do it *de bon cœur*, strike me dumb: you have married a woman beautiful in her person, charming in her airs, prudent in her conduct, constant in her inclinations, and of a nice morality—stap my vitals!"

Poor *Hoyden* fares ill in his lordship's description of her, though she could expect no better at his hands for her desertion of him. She wants sentiment, to be sure, but she has other qualifications—she is a fine bouncing piece of flesh and blood. Her first announcement is decisive—"Let loose the greyhound, and lock up *Hoyden*." Her declaration, "It's well they've got me a husband, or ecod, I'd marry the baker," comes from her mouth like a shot from a culverin, and leaves no doubt, by its effect upon the ear, that she would have made it good in the sequel, if she had not been provided for. Her indifference to the man she is to marry, and her attachment to the finery and the title, are justified by an attentive observation of nature in its simplest guise. There is, however, no harm in *Hoyden*; she merely wishes to consult her own inclination: she is by no means like *Corinna* in the "Confederacy," "a devilish girl at the bottom," nor is it her great delight to plague other people.—*Sir Tunbelly Clumsy* is the right worshipful and worthy father of so delicate an offspring. He is a coarse, substantial contrast to the flippant and flimsy *Lord Foppington*. If the one is not without reason "proud to be at the head of so prevailing a party" as that of coxcombs, the other may look big and console himself (under some affronts) with being a very competent representative, a knight of the shire, of the once formidable, though now obsolete class of country squires, who had no idea beyond the boundaries of their own estates, or the circumference of their own persons. His unwieldy dulness gives, by the rule of contraries, a lively sense of lightness and grace: his stupidity answers all the purposes of wit. His portly paunch repels a jest like a woolsack: a sarcasm rebounds from him like a ball. His presence is a cure for gravity; and he is a standing satire upon himself and the class in natural history to which he belonged.—*Sir John Brute*, in the "Provoked Wife," is an animal of the same English growth, but of a cross-grained breed. He has a spice of the demon mixed up with the brute; is mischievous as well as stupid; has improved his natural parts by a town education and example; opposes the fine-lady airs and graces of his wife by brawling oaths, impenetrable surliness, and pot-house valour; overpowers any tendency she might have to vapours or hysterics, by the fumes of tobacco and strong beer; and thinks to be master in his own house by roaring in taverns, reeling home drunk every night,

breaking lamps, and beating the watch. He does not, however, find this lordly method answer. He turns out to be a coward as well as a bully, and dares not resent the injuries he has provoked by his unmanly behaviour. This was Garrick's favourite part; and I have heard that his acting in the drunken scene, in which he was disguised, not as a clergyman, but as a woman of the town, which was an alteration of his own to suit the delicacy of the times, was irresistible. The ironical conversations in this play between *Belinda* and *Lady Brute*, as well as those in the "Relapse," between *Amanda* and her cousin *Berinthia*, will do to compare with Congreve in the way of wit and studied raillery, but they will not stand the comparison. *Araminta* and *Clarissa* keep up the ball between them with more spirit, for their conversation is very like that of kept-mistresses; and the mixture of fashionable *slang* and professed want of principle gives a sort of zest and high seasoning to their confidential communications, which Vanbrugh could supply as well as anybody. But he could not do without the taint of grossness and licentiousness. *Lady Townly* is not the really vicious character, nor quite the fine lady, which the author would have her to be. *Lady Grace* is so far better: she is what she pretends to be, merely *sober* and insipid.—Vanbrugh's *forte* was not the sentimental or didactic; his genius flags and grows dull when it is not put into action, and wants the stimulus of sudden emergency, or the fortuitous collision of different motives, to call out all its force and vivacity. His antitheses are happy and brilliant contrasts of character; his *double entendres* equivocal situations; his best jokes are practical devices, not epigrammatic conceits. His wit is that which is emphatically called *mother-wit*. It brings those who possess it, or to whom he lends it, into scrapes by its restlessness, and brings them out of them by its alacrity. Several of his favourite characters are knavish, adroit adventurers, who have all the gipsy jargon, the cunning impudence, cool presence of mind, selfishness, and indefatigable industry; all the excuses, lying, dexterity, the intellectual juggling and legerdemain tricks, necessary to fit them for this sort of predatory warfare on the simplicity, follies, or vices of mankind. He discovers the utmost dramatic generalship in bringing off his characters at a pinch, and by an instantaneous *ruse de guerre*, when the case seems hopeless in any other hands. The train of his associations, to express the same thing in metaphysical language, lies in following the suggestions of his fancy into every possible connexion of cause and effect, rather than into every possible combination of likeness or difference. His ablest characters show that they are so by displaying their ingenuity, address, and presence of mind in critical junctures, and in their own affairs, rather than their wisdom or their wit "in intellectual gladiatorship," or in speculating on the affairs and characters of other people.

Farquhar's chief characters are also adventurers; but they are adventurers of a romantic, not a knavish stamp, and succeed no less by their honesty than their boldness. They conquer their difficulties, and effect their "hair-breadth 'scapes" by the impulse of natural enthusiasm and the confidence of high principles of gallantry and honour, as much as by their dexterity and readiness at expedients. They are real gentlemen, and only pretended imposters. Vanbrugh's upstart heroes are without "any relish of salvation," without generosity, virtue, or any pretensions to it. We have little sympathy for them, and no respect at all. But we have every sort of good-will towards Farquhar's heroes, who have as many peccadilloes to answer for, and play as many rogue's tricks, but are honest fellows at bottom. I know little other difference between these two capital writers and copyists of nature, than that Farquhar's nature is the better nature of the two. We seem to like both the author and his favourites. He has humour, character, and invention, in common with the other, with a more unaffected gaiety and spirit of enjoyment, which overflows and sparkles in all he does. He makes us laugh from pleasure oftener than from malice. He somewhere prides himself in having introduced on the stage the class of comic heroes here spoken of, which has since become a standard character, and which represents the warm-hearted, rattled-brained, thoughtless, high-spirited young fellow, who floats on the back of his misfortunes without repining, who forfeits appearances, but saves his honour—and he gives us to understand that it was his own. He did not need to be ashamed of it. Indeed there is internal evidence that this sort of character is his own, for it pervades his works generally, and is the moving spirit that informs them. His comedies have on this account, probably, a greater appearance of truth and nature than almost any others. His incidents succeed one another with rapidity, but without premeditation; his wit is easy and spontaneous; his style animated, unembarrassed, and flowing; his characters full of life and spirit, and never overstrained so as to "o'erstep the modesty of nature," though they sometimes, from haste and carelessness, seem left in a crude, unfinished state. There is a constant ebullition of gay, laughing invention, cordial good-humour, and fine animal spirits, in his writings.

Of the four writers here classed together, we should perhaps have courted Congreve's acquaintance most, for his wit and the elegance of his manners; Wycherley's, for his sense and observation on human nature; Vanbrugh's, for his power of farcical description and telling a story; Farquhar's, for the pleasure of his society, and the love of good fellowship. His fine gentlemen are not gentlemen of fortune and fashion, like those in Congreve; but are rather "God Almighty's gentlemen." His valets are good fellows: even his chambermaids are some of them disinterested and sincere. But his fine ladies, it must be allowed, are not so amiable, so witty, or accomplished, as those in Congreve. Perhaps they both described women in high life as they found them: Congreve took their conversation, Farquhar their conduct. In the way of fashionable vice and petrifying affectation, there is nothing to come up to his *Lady Lurewell*, in the "Trip to the Jubilee." She by no means makes good Mr. Burke's courtly and chivalrous observation, that the evil of vice consists principally in its want of refinement; and one benefit of the dramatic exhibition of such characters is, that they overturn false maxims of morality, and settle accounts fairly and satisfactorily between theory and practice. Her lover, *Colonel Standard*, is indeed an awkward incumbrance upon so fine a lady: it was a character that the poet did not like; and he has merely sketched him in, leaving him to answer for himself as well as he could, which is but badly. We have no suspicion, either from his conduct, or from any hint dropped by accident, that he is the first seducer and the possessor of the virgin affections of *Lady Lurewell*. The double transformation of this virago from vice to virtue, and from virtue to vice again, her plausible pretensions and artful wiles, her violent temper and dissolute passions, show a thorough knowledge of the effects both of nature and habit in making up human character. Farquhar's own heedless turn for gallantry would be likely to throw him upon such a character; and his goodness of heart and sincerity of disposition would teach him to expose its wanton duplicity and gilded rottenness. *Lurewell* is almost as abandoned a character as *Olivia*, in the "Plain Dealer;" but the indignation excited against her is of a less serious and tragic cast. Her peevish disgust and affected horror at everything that comes near her, form a very edifying picture. Her dissatisfaction and *ennui* are not mere airs and graces worn for fashion's sake; but are real and tormenting inmates of her breast, arising from a surfeit of pleasure and the consciousness of guilt. All that is hateful in the caprice, ill-humour, spite, *hauteur*, folly, impudence, and affectation, of the complete woman of quality, is contained in the scene between her and her servants in the first act. The depravity would be intolerable, even in imagination, if the weakness were not ludicrous in the extreme. It shows, in the highest degree, the power of circumstances and example to pervert the understanding, the imagination, and even the senses. The manner in which the character of the gay, wild, free-hearted, but not altogether profligate or unfeeling *Sir Harry Wildair*, is played off against the designing, vindictive, imperious, uncontrollable, and unreasonable humours of *Lurewell*, in the scene where she tries to convince him of his wife's infidelity, while he stops his ears to her pretended proofs, is not surpassed in modern comedy. I shall give it here:

"*Wildair*. Now, dear madam, I have secured my brother, you have disposed of the colonel, and we'll rail at love till we ha'n't a word more to say.

Lurewell. Ay, sir Harry. Please to sit a little, sir. You must know I'm in a strange humour of asking you some questions. How did you like your lady, pray, sir?

Wild. Like her! ha! ha! ha! So very well, faith, that for her sake I'm in love with every woman I meet.

Lure. And did matrimony please you extremely?

Wild. So very much, that if polygamy were allowed, I would have a new wife every day.

Lure. Oh, sir Harry! this is raillery. But your serious thoughts upon the matter, pray.

Wild. Why, then, madam, to give you my true sentiments of wedlock: I had a lady that I married by chance, she was virtuous by chance, and I loved her by great chance. Nature gave her beauty, education an air; and fortune threw a young fellow of five-and-twenty in her lap. I courted her all day, loved her all night; she was my mistress one day, and my wife another: I found in one the variety of a thousand, and the very confinement of marriage gave me the pleasure of change.

Lure. And she was very virtuous.

Wild. Look ye, madam, you know she was beautiful. She had good-nature about her mouth, the smile of beauty in her cheeks, sparkling wit in her forehead, and sprightly love in her eyes.

Lure. Pshaw! I knew her very well; the woman was well enough. But you don't answer my question, sir.

Wild. So, madam, as I told you before, she was young and beautiful, I was rich and vigorous; my estate gave a lustre to my love, and a swing to our enjoyment; round, like the ring that made us one, our golden pleasures circled without end.

Lure. Golden pleasures! Golden fiddlesticks. What d'ye tell me of your canting stuff? Was she virtuous, I say?

Wild. Ready to burst with envy; but I will torment thee a little.—[*Aside.*] So, madam, I powdered to please her, she dressed to engage me; we toyed away the morning in amorous nonsense, lolled away the evening in the Park or the playhouse, and all the night—hem!

Lure. Look ye, sir, answer my question, or I shall take it ill.

Wild. Then, madam, there never was such a pattern of unity. Her wants were still prevented by my supplies; my own heart whispered me her desires, 'cause she herself was there; no contention ever rose, but the dear strife of who should most oblige: no noise about authority; for neither would stoop to command, 'cause both thought it glory to obey.

Lure. Stuff! stuff! stuff! I won't believe a word on't.

Wild. Ha! ha! ha! Then, madam, we never felt the yoke of matrimony, because our inclinations made us one; a power superior to the forms of wedlock. The marriage torch had lost its weaker light in the bright flame of mutual love that joined our hearts before; then—

Lure. Hold, hold, sir; I cannot bear it; Sir Harry, I'm affronted.

Wild. Ha! ha! ha! Affronted!

Lure. Yes, sir; 'tis an affront to any woman to hear another commended; and I will resent it.—In short, Sir Harry, your wife was a—

Wild. But, madam—no detraction. I'll tell you what she was. So much an angel in her conduct, that though I saw another in her arms, I should have thought the devil had raised the phantom, and my more conscious reason had given my eyes the lie.

Lure. Very well! Then I a'n't to be believed, it seems. But, d'ye hear, sir?

Wild. Nay, madam, do you hear! I tell you, 'tis not in the power of malice to cast a blot upon her fame; and though the vanity of our sex, and the envy of yours, conspired both against her honour, I would not hear a syllable. [*Stopping his ears.*

Lure. Why then, as I hope to breathe, you shall hear it. The picture! the picture! the picture! [*Bawling aloud.*

Wild. Ran, tan, tan. A pistol-bullet from ear to ear.

Lure. That picture which you had just now from the French marquis for a thousand pound; that very picture did your very virtuous wife send to the marquis as a pledge of her very virtuous and dying affection. So that you are both robbed of your honour, and cheated of your money. [*Aloud.*

Wild. Louder, louder, madam.

Lure. I tell you, sir, your wife was a jilt; I know it, I'll swear it.—She virtuous! she was a devil!

Wild. [*Sings.*] Tal, al, deral.

Lure. Was ever the like seen! He won't hear me. I burst with malice, and now he won't mind me! Won't you hear me yet?

Wild. No, no, madam.

Lure. Nay, then, I can't bear it.—[*Bursts out a crying.*] Sir, I must say that you're an unworthy person to use a woman of quality at this rate, when she has her heart full of malice; I don't know but it may make me miscarry. Sir, I say again and again, that she was no better than one of us, and I know it; I have seen it with my eyes, so I have.

Wild. Good heavens deliver me, I beseech thee. How shall I 'scape!

Lure. Will you hear me yet? Dear sir Harry, do but hear me; I'm longing to speak.

Wild. Oh! I have it.—Hush, hush, hush.

Lure. Eh! what's the matter?

Wild. A mouse! a mouse! a mouse!

Lure. Where? where? where?

Wild. Your petticoats, your petticoats, madam.—[*Lurewell shrieks and runs.*] O my head! I was never worsted by a woman before. But I have heard so much to know the marquis to be a villain.

—[*Knocking.*] Nay, then, I must run for't.—[*Runs out, and returns.*] The entry is stopped by a chair coming in; and something there is in that chair that I will discover, if I can find a place to hide myself.—[*Goes to the closet door.*] Fast! I have keys about me for most locks about St. James's. Let me see.—[*Tries one key.*] No, no; this opens my lady Planthorn's back-door.—[*Tries another.*] Nor this; this is the key to my lady Stakeall's garden.—[*Tries a third.*] Ay, ay, this does it, faith.—[*Goes into the closet.*]"

The dialogue between *Cherry* and *Archer*, in the "Beaux' Stratagem," in which she repeats her well-conned love-catechism, is as good as this, but not so fit to be repeated anywhere but on the stage. The "Beaux' Stratagem" is the best of his plays, as a whole; infinitely lively, bustling, and full of point and interest. The assumed disguise of the two principal characters, *Archer* and *Aimwell*, is a perpetual amusement to the mind. *Scrub* is an indispensable appendage to a country gentleman's kitchen, and an exquisite confidant for the secrets of young ladies. The "Recruiting Officer" is not one of Farquhar's best comedies, though it is light and entertaining. It contains chiefly sketches and hints of characters; and the conclusion of the plot is rather lame. He informs us, in the dedication to the published play, that it was founded on some local and personal circumstances that happened in Shropshire, where he was himself a recruiting officer; and it seems not unlikely, that most of the scenes actually took place at the foot of the Wrekin. The "Inconstant" is much superior to it. The romantic interest and impressive catastrophe of this play I thought had been borrowed from the more poetical and tragedy-practised muse of *Beaumont* and *Fletcher*: but I find they are taken from an actual circumstance which took place in the author's knowledge, at Paris. His other pieces, "Love and a Bottle," and "The Twin Rivals," are not on a par with these; and are no longer in possession of the stage. The public are, after all, not the worst judges.—Farquhar's Letters, prefixed to the collection of his plays, are lively, good-humoured, and sensible; and contain, among other things, an admirable exposition of the futility of the dramatic unities of time and place. This criticism preceded Dennis's remarks on that subject, in his Strictures on Mr. Addison's Cato; and completely anticipates all that Dr. Johnson has urged so unanswerably on the subject, in his preface to Shakspeare.

We may date the decline of English comedy from the time of Farquhar. For this several causes might be assigned in the political and moral changes of the times; but among other minor ones, Jeremy Collier, in his View of the English Stage, frightened the poets, and did all he could to spoil the stage, by pretending to reform it; that is, by making it an echo of the pulpit, instead of a reflection of the manners of the world. He complains bitterly of the profaneness of the stage; and is for fining the actors for every oath they utter, to put an end to the practice; as if common swearing had been an invention of the poets and stage-players. He cannot endure that the fine gentlemen drink, and the fine ladies intrigue, in the scenes of Congreve and Wycherley, when things so contrary to law and gospel happened nowhere else. He is vehement against duelling, as a barbarous custom, of which the example is suffered with impunity nowhere but on the stage. He is shocked at the number of fortunes that are irreparably ruined by the vice of gaming on the boards of the theatres. He seems to think that every breach of the ten commandments begins and ends there. He complains that the tame husbands of his time are laughed at on the stage, and that the successful gallants triumph, which was without precedent either in the city or the court. He does not think it enough that the stage "shows vice in its own image, scorn its own feature," unless they are damned at the same instant, and carried off (like Don Juan) by real devils to the infernal regions, before the faces of the spectators. It seems that the author would have been contented to be present at a comedy or a farce, like a father Inquisitor, if there was to be an *auto da fé* at the end, to burn both the actors and the poet. This sour, non-juring critic has a great horror and repugnance at poor human nature, in nearly all its shapes; of the existence of which he appears only to be aware through the stage: and this he considers as the only exception to the practice of piety, and the performance of the whole duty of man; and seems fully convinced, that if this nuisance were abated, the whole world would be regulated according to the creed and the catechism.—This is a strange blindness and infatuation! He forgets, in his over-heated zeal, two things: First, That the stage must be copied from real life, that the manners represented there must exist elsewhere, and "denote a foregone conclusion," to satisfy common sense.—Secondly, That the stage cannot shock common decency, according to the notions that prevail of it in any age or country, because the exhibition is public. If the pulpit, for instance, had banished all vice and imperfection from the world, as our critic would suppose, we should not have seen the offensive

reflection of them on the stage, which he resents as an affront to the cloth, and an outrage on religion. On the contrary, with such a sweeping reformation as this theory implies, the office of the preacher, as well as of the player, would be gone; and if common peccadilloes of lying, swearing, intriguing, fighting, drinking, gaming, and other such obnoxious dramatic common-places, were once fairly got rid of in reality, neither the comic poet would be able to laugh at them on the stage, nor our good-natured author to consign them over to damnation elsewhere. The work is, however, written with ability, and did much mischief: it produced those *do-me-good*, lack-a-daisical, whining, make-believe comedies in the next age, (such as Steele's "Conscious Lovers," and others,) which are enough to set one to sleep, and where the author tries in vain to be merry and wise in the same breath; in which the utmost stretch of licentiousness goes no farther than the gallant's being suspected of keeping a mistress, and the highest proof of courage is given in his refusing to accept a challenge.

In looking into the old editions of the comedies of the last age, I find the names of the best actors of those times, of whom scarcely any record is left but in Colley Cibber's Life, and the monument to Mrs. Oldfield, in Westminster Abbey; which Voltaire reckons among the proofs of the liberality, wisdom, and politeness of the English nation:—

"Let no rude hand deface it,
And its forlorn *hic jacet.*"

Authors after their deaths live in their works; players only in their epitaphs and the breath of common tradition. They "die and leave the world no copy." Their uncertain popularity is as short-lived as it is dazzling; and in a few years nothing is known of them but that *they were.*

THE

DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

WILLIAM WYCHERLEY.

As long as men are false and women vain,
Whilst gold continues to be virtue's bane,
In pointed satire WYCHERLEY shall reign.

EVELYN.

LOVE IN A WOOD; OR, ST. JAMES'S PARK.

A Comedy.

—— Excludit sanos Helicone poetas
Democritus.—HORAT.

TO HER GRACE

THE DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND.

MADAM,—All authors whatever in their dedication are poets; but I am now to write to a lady who stands as little in need of flattery, as her beauty of art; otherwise I should prove as ill a poet to her in my dedication, as to my reader in my play. I can do your Grace no honour, nor make you more admirers than you have already; yet I can do myself the honour to let the world know I am the greatest you have. You will pardon me, Madam, for you know it is very hard for a new author, and poet too, to govern his ambition: for poets, let them pass in the world ever so much for modest, honest men, but begin praise to others which concludes in themselves; and are like rooks, who lend people money but to win it back again, and so leave them in debt to 'em for nothing; they offer laurel and incense to their heroes, but wear it themselves, and perfume themselves. This is true, Madam, upon the honest word of an author who never yet writ dedication. Yet though I cannot lie like them, I am as vain as they; and cannot but publicly give your Grace my humble acknowledgments for the favours I have received from you:—this, I say, is the poet's gratitude, which, in plain English, is only pride and ambition; and that the world might know your Grace did me the honour to see my play twice together. Yet, perhaps, my enviers of your favour will suggest 'twas in Lent, and therefore for your mortification. Then, as a jealous author, I am concerned not to have your Grace's favours lessened, or rather my reputation; and to let them know, you were pleased, after that, to command a copy from me of this play;—the only way, without beauty and wit, to win a poor poet's heart. 'Tis a sign your Grace understands nothing better than obliging all the world after the best and most proper manner. But, Madam, to be obliging to that excess as you are (pardon me, if I tell you, out of my extreme concern and service for your Grace) is a dangerous quality, and may be very incommode to you; for civility makes poets as troublesome, as charity makes beggars; and your Grace will be hereafter as much pestered with such scurvy offerings as this, poems, panegyrics, and the like, as you are now with petitions: and, Madam, take it from me, no man with papers in 's hand is more dreadful than a poet; no, not a lawyer with his declarations. Your Grace sure did not well consider what ye did, in sending for my play: you little thought I would have had the confidence to send you a dedication too. But, Madam, you find I am as unreasonable, and have as little conscience, as if I had driven the poetic trade longer than I have, and ne'er consider you had enough of the play. But (having suffered now so severely) I beseech your Grace, have a care for the future; take my counsel, and be (if you can possible) as proud and ill-natured as other people of quality, since your quiet is so much concerned, and since you have more reason than any to value yourself:—for you have that perfection of beauty (without thinking it so) which others of your sex but think they have; that generosity in your actions which others of your quality have only in their promises; that spirit, wit and judgment, and all other qualifications which fit heroes to command, and would make any but your Grace proud. I begin now, elevated by my subject, to write with the emotion and fury of a poet, yet the integrity of an historian; and I could never be weary—nay, sure this were my only way to make my readers never weary too, though they were a more impatient generation of people than they are. In fine, speaking thus of your Grace, I should please all the world but you; therefore I must once observe and obey you against my will, and say no more, than that I am, Madam, your Grace's most obliged, and most humble servant,

WILLIAM WYCHERLEY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MR. RANGER, MR. VINCENT, MR. VALENTINE, *Young Gentlemen of the Town.*
ALDERMAN GRIPE, *seemingly precise, but a covetous, lecherous, old Usurer of the City.*
SIR SIMON ADDLEPLOT, *a Coxcomb, always in pursuit of Women of great Fortunes.*
MR. DAPPERWIT, *a brisk, conceited, half-witted Fellow of the Town.*

CHRISTINA, VALENTINE'S *Mistress.*
LYDIA, RANGER'S *Mistress.*

MY LADY FLIPPANT, GRIPE'S *Sister, an affected Widow in distress for a Husband, though still declaiming against Marriage.*
MRS. MARTHA, GRIPE'S *Daughter.*
MRS. JOYNER, *a Match-maker, or precise City Bawd.*
MRS. CROSSBITE, *an old cheating Jilt, and Bawd to her Daughter.*
MISS LUCY, *her Daughter.*
ISABEL, CHRISTINA'S *Woman.*
LEONORE, *Servant to* LYDIA.

CROSSBITE'S Landlord, *and his* Prentices, Servants, Waiters, *other Attendants.*

SCENE,—LONDON.

B 2

PROLOGUE.

Custom, which bids the thief from cart harangue
All those that come to make and see him hang,
Wills the damn'd poet (though he knows he's gone)
To greet you ere his execution.
Not having fear of critic 'fore his eyes,
But still rejecting wholesome, good advice,
He e'en is come to suffer here to-day
For counterfeiting (as you judge) a play,
Which is against dread Phœbus highest treason;
Damn, damning judges, therefore, you have reason:—
You he does mean who, for the selfsame fault,
That damning privilege of yours have bought.
So the huge bankers, when they needs must fail,
Send the small brothers of their trade to jail;
Whilst they by breaking gentlemen are made,
Then, more than any, scorn poor men o' th' trade.
You harden'd renegado poets, who
Treat rhyming poets worse than Turk would do,
But vent your heathenish rage,—hang, draw, and quarter,—
His Muse will die to-day a fleering martyr;
Since for bald jest, dull libel, or lampoon,
There are who suffer persecution
With the undaunted briskness of buffoon,
And strict professors live of raillery,
Defying porter's-lodge, or pillory.
For those who yet write on our poet's fate,
Should as co-sufferers commiserate;
But he in vain their pity now would crave,
Who for themselves, alas! no pity have,
And their own gasping credit will not save;
And those, much less, our criminal would spare,
Who ne'er in rhyme transgress;—if such there are.
Well then, who nothing hopes, needs nothing fear;
And he, before your cruel votes shall do it,
By his despair declares himself no poet.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Gripe's *House, in the Evening.*

Enter my Lady Flippant *and* Mrs. Joyner.

Flip. Not a husband to be had for money!—Come, come, I might have been a better housewife for myself, as the world goes now, if I had dealt for an heir with his guardian, uncle, or mother-in-law; and you are no better than a chouse, a cheat.

Joyn. I a cheat, madam!

Flip. I am out of my money, and patience too.

Joyn. Do not run out of your patience, whatever you do:—'tis a necessary virtue for a widow without a jointure, in truly.

Flip. Vile woman! though my fortune be something wasted, my person's in good repair. If I had not depended on you, I had had a husband before this time. When I gave you the last five pounds—

Joyn. And I had kept my promise if you had co-operated.

Flip. Co-operated! what should I have done? 'Tis well known no woman breathing could use more industry to get her a husband than I have. Has not my husband's 'scutcheon walked as much ground as the citizens' signs since the Fire?—that no quarter of the town might be ignorant of the widow Flippant.

Joyn. 'Tis well known, madam, indeed.

Flip. Have I not owned myself (against my stomach) the relict of a citizen, to credit my fortune?

Joyn. 'Tis confessed, madam.

Flip. Have I not constantly kept Covent-Garden church, St. Martin's, the playhouses, Hyde-park, Mulberry-garden, and all other the public marts where widows and maids are exposed?

Joyn. Far be it from me to think you have an aversion to a husband. But why, madam, have you refused so many good offers?

Flip. Good offers, Mrs. Joyner! I'll be sworn I never had an offer since my late husband's.—If I had an offer, Mrs. Joyner!—there's the thing, Mrs. Joyner.

Joyn. Then your frequent and public detestation of marriage is thought real; and if you have had no offer, there's the thing, madam.

Flip. I cannot deny but I always rail against marriage;—which is the widow's way to it certainly.

Joyn. 'Tis the desperate way of the desperate widows, in truly.

Flip. Would you have us as tractable as the wenches that eat oatmeal, and fooled like them too?

Joyn. If nobody were wiser than I, I should think, since the widow wants the natural allurement which the virgin has, you ought to give men all other encouragements, in truly.

Flip. Therefore, on the contrary, because the widow's fortune (whether supposed or real) is her chiefest bait, the more chary she seems of it, and the more she withdraws it, the more eagerly the busy gaping fry will bite. With us widows, husbands are got like bishopricks, by saying *No:* and I tell you, a young heir is as shy of a widow as of a rook, to my knowledge.

Joyn. I can allege nothing against your practice—but your ill success; and indeed you must use another method with sir Simon Addleplot.

Flip. Will he be at your house at the hour?

Joyn. He'll be there by ten:—'tis now nine. I'll warrant you he will not fail.

Flip. I'll warrant you then I will not fail:—for 'tis more than time I were sped.

Joyn. Mr. Dapperwit has not been too busy with you, I hope?—Your experience has taught you to prevent a mischance.

Flip. No, no, my mischance (as you call it) is greater than that. I have but three months to reckon, ere I lie down with my port and equipage;

and must be delivered of a woman, a footman, and a coachman:—for my coach must down, unless I can get sir Simon to draw with me.

Joyn. He will pair with you exactly if I know all. [*Aside.*

Flip. Ah, Mrs. Joyner, nothing grieves me like the putting down my coach! For the fine clothes, the fine lodgings,—let 'em go; for a lodging is as unnecessary a thing to a widow that has a coach, as a hat to a man that has a good peruke. For, as you see about town, she is most properly at home in her coach:—she eats, and drinks, and sleeps in her coach; and for her visits, she receives them in the playhouse.

Joyn. Ay, ay, let the men keep lodgings, as you say, madam, if they will.

Enter behind, at one door, GRIPE *and* SIR SIMON ADDLEPLOT, *the latter in the dress of a Clerk; at the other,* MRS. MARTHA.

Flip. Do you think if things had been with me as they have been, I would ever have housed with this counter-fashion brother of mine, (who hates a vest as much as a surplice,) to have my patches assaulted every day at dinner, my freedom censured, and my visitants shut out of doors?—Poor Mr. Dapperwit cannot be admitted.

Joyn. He knows him too well to keep his acquaintance.

Flip. He is a censorious rigid fop, and knows nothing.

Gripe. So, so! [*Behind.*

Joyn. [*Aside.*] Is he here?—[*To my* Lady FLIPPANT.] Nay, with your pardon, madam, I must contradict you there. He is a prying commonwealth's-man, an implacable magistrate, a sturdy pillar of his cause, and—[*To* GRIPE.] But, oh me, is your worship so near then? if I had thought you heard me—

Gripe. Why, why, Mrs. Joyner, I have said as much of myself ere now; and without vanity, I profess.

Joyn. I know your virtue is proof against vainglory; but the truth to your face looks like flattery in your worship's servant.

Gripe. No, no; say what you will of me in that kind, far be it from me to suspect you of flattery.

Joyn. In truly, your worship knows yourself, and knows me, for I am none of those—

Flip. [*Aside.*] Now they are in—Mrs. Joyner, I'll go before to your house, you'll be sure to come after me.

Joyn. Immediately.—[*Exit* FLIPPANT.] But as I was saying, I am none of those—

Gripe. No, Mrs. Joyner, you cannot sew pillows under folks' elbows; you cannot hold a candle to the devil; you cannot tickle a trout to take him; you—

Joyn. Lord, how well you do know me indeed! —and you shall see I know your worship as well. You cannot backslide from your principles; you cannot be terrified by the laws; nor bribed to allegiance by office or preferment; you—

Gripe. Hold, hold, my praise must not interrupt yours.

Joyn. With your worship's pardon, in truly, I must own.

Gripe. I am full of your praise, and it will run over.

Joyn. Nay, sweet sir, you are—

Gripe. Nay, sweet Mrs. Joyner, you are—

Joyn. Nay, good your worship, you are—
[*Stops her mouth with his handkerchief.*

Gripe. I say you are—

Joyn. I must not be rude with your worship.

Gripe. You are a nursing mother to the saints; through you they gather together; through you they fructify and increase; and through you the child cries out of the hand-basket.

Joyn. Through you virgins are married, or provided for as well; through you the reprobate's wife is made a saint; and through you the widow is not disconsolate, nor misses her husband.

Gripe. Through you—

Joyn. Indeed you will put me to the blush.

Gripe. Blushes are badges of imperfection:—saints have no shame. You are—are the flower of matrons, Mrs. Joyner.

Joyn. You are the pink of courteous aldermen.

Gripe. You are the muffler of secrecy.

Joyn. You are the head-band of justice.

Gripe. Thank you, sweet Mrs. Joyner: do you think so indeed? You are—you are the bonfire of devotion.

Joyn. You are the bellows of zeal.

Gripe. You are the cup-board of charity.

Joyn. You are the fob of liberality.

Gripe. You are the rivet of sanctified love or wedlock.

Joyn. You are the picklock and dark-lantern of policy; and, in a word, a conventicle of virtues.

Gripe. Your servant, your servant, sweet Mrs. Joyner! you have stopped my mouth.

Joyn. Your servant, your servant, sweet alderman! I have nothing to say.

Sir Sim. The half-pullet will be cold, sir.

Gripe. Mrs. Joyner, you shall sup with me.

Joyn. Indeed I am engaged to supper with some of your man's friends; and I came on purpose to get leave for him too.

Gripe. I cannot deny you anything. But I have forgot to tell you what a kind of fellow my sister's Dapperwit is: before a full table of the coffee-house sages, he had the impudence to hold an argument against me in the defence of vests and protections; and therefore I forbid him my house; besides, when he came I was forced to lock up my daughter for fear of him, nay, I think the poor child herself was afraid of him.—Come hither child, were you not afraid of Dapperwit?

Mar. Yes indeed, sir, he is a terrible man.—Yet I durst meet with him in a piazza at midnight. [*Aside.*

Gripe. He shall never come into my doors again.

Mar. Shall Mr. Dapperwit never come hither again then?

Gripe. No, child.

Mar. I am afraid he will.

Gripe. I warrant thee.

Mar. [*Aside.*] I warrant you then I'll go to him.—I am glad of that, for I hate him as much as a bishop.

Gripe. Thou art no child of mine, if thou dost not hate bishops and wits.—Well, Mrs. Joyner, I'll keep you no longer. [*To* ADDLEPLOT.] Jonas, wait on Mrs. Joyner.

Joyn. Good night to your worship.

Gripe. But stay, stay, Mrs. Joyner: have you spoken with the widow Crossbite about her little daughter, as I desired?

Joyn. I will to-morrow early; it shall be the first thing I'll do after my prayers.

Gripe. If Dapperwit should contaminate her—I cannot rest till I have redeemed her from the jaws of that lion.—Good night.

Joyn. Good gentleman.

[*Exeunt* GRIPE *and* MARTHA.

Sir Sim. Ha! ha! ha! Mrs. Joyner.

Joyn. What's the matter, sir Simon?

Sir Sim. Ha! ha! ha!—let us make haste to your house, or I shall burst, faith and troth, to see what fools you and I make of these people.

Joyn. I will not rob you of any of the credit:—I am but a feeble instrument, you are an engineer.

Sir Sim. Remember what you say now when things succeed, and do not tell me then,—I must thank your wit for all.

Joyn. No, in truly, sir Simon.

Sir Sim. Nay, I am sure Dapperwit and I have been partners in many an intrigue, and he uses to serve me so.

Joyn. He is an ill man to intrigue with, as you call it.

Sir Sim. Ay, so are all your wits; a pox! if a man's understanding be not so public as theirs, he cannot do a wise action but they go away with the honour of it, if he be of their acquaintance.

Joyn. Why do you keep such acquaintance then?

Sir Sim. There is a proverb, Mrs. Joyner, *You may know him by his company.*

Joyn. No, no, to be thought a man of parts, you must always keep company with a man of less wit than yourself.

Sir Sim. That's the hardest thing in the world for me to do, faith and troth.

Joyn. What, to find a man of less wit than yourself? Pardon my raillery, sir Simon.

Sir Sim. No, no, I cannot keep company with a fool:—I wonder how men of parts can do't, there's something in't.

Joyn. If you could, all your wise actions would be your own, and your money would be your own too.

Sir Sim. Nay, faith and troth, that's true; for your wits are plaguily given to borrow. They'll borrow of their wench, coachman, or linkboy, their hire, Mrs. Joyner; Dapperwit has that trick with a vengeance.

Joyn. Why will you keep company with him then, I say? for, to be plain with you, you have followed him so long, that you are thought but his cully; for every wit has his cully, as every squire his led captain.

Sir Sim. I his cully, I his cully, Mrs. Joyner! Lord, that I should be thought a cully to any wit breathing!

Joyn. Nay, do not take it so to heart, for the best wits of the town are but cullies themselves.

Sir Sim. To whom, to whom, to whom, Mrs. Joyner?

Joyn. To sempstresses and bawds.

Sir Sim. To your knowledge Mrs. Joyner.—[*Aside.*] There I was with her.

Joyn. To tailors and vintners, but especially to the French houses.

Sir Sim. But Dapperwit is a cully to none of them; for he ticks.

Joyn. I care not, but I wish you were a cully to none but me; that's all the hurt I wish you.

Sir Sim. Thank you, Mrs. Joyner. Well, I will throw off Dapperwit's acquaintance when I am married, and will only be a cully to my wife; and that's no more than the wisest husband of 'em all is.

Joyn. Then you think you shall carry Mrs. Martha?

Sir Sim. Your hundred guineas are as good as in your lap.

Joyn. But I am afraid this double plot of yours should fail: you would sooner succeed if you only designed upon Mrs. Martha, or only upon my lady Flippant.

Sir Sim. Nay, then, you are no woman of intrigue, faith and troth: 'tis good to have two strings to one's bow. If Mrs. Martha be coy, I tell the widow I put on my disguise for her; but if Mrs. Martha be kind to Jonas, sir Simon Addleplot will be false to the widow: which is no more than widows are used to; for a promise to a widow is as seldom kept as a vow made at sea, as Dapperwit says.

Joyn. I am afraid they should discover you.

Sir Sim. You have nothing to fear; you have your twenty guineas in your pocket for helping me into my service, and if I get into Mrs. Martha's quarters, you have a hundred more; if into the widow's, fifty:—happy go lucky! Will her ladyship be at your house at the hour?

Joyn. Yes.

Sir Sim. Then you shall see when I am sir Simon Addleplot and myself I'll look like myself; now I am Jonas, I look like an ass. You never thought sir Simon Addleplot could have looked so like an ass by his ingenuity.

Joyn. Pardon me, sir Simon.

Sir Sim. Nay, do not flatter, faith and troth.

Joyn. Come let us go, 'tis time.

Sir Sim. I will carry the widow to the French-house.

Joyn. If she will go.

Sir Sim. If she will go! why, did you ever know a widow refuse a treat? no more than a lawyer a fee, faith and troth: yet I know too—

No treat, sweet words, good mien, but sly intrigue,
That must at length the jilting widow fegue.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The French-House. A Table, Wine, and Candles.*

Enter VINCENT, RANGER, *and* DAPPERWIT.

Dap. Pray, Mr. Ranger, let's have no drinking to-night.

Vin. Pray, Mr. Ranger, let's have no Dapperwit to-night.

Ran. Nay, nay, Vincent.

Vin. A pox! I hate his impertinent chat more than he does the honest Burgundy.

Dap. But why should you force wine upon us? we are not all of your gusto.

Vin. But why should you force your chawed jests, your damned ends of your mouldy lampoons, and last year's sonnets, upon us? we are not all of your gusto.

Dap. The wine makes me sick, let me perish!

Vin. Thy rhymes make me spew.

Ran. At repartee already! Come, Vincent, I know you would rather have him pledge you: here,

Dapperwit—[*Gives him the glass.*]—But why are you so eager to have him drink always?

Vin. Because he is so eager to talk always, and there is no other way to silence him.

Enter Waiter.

Wait. Here is a gentleman desires to speak with Mr. Vincent.

Vin. I come. [*Exit* VINCENT *with* Waiter.

Dap. He may drink, because he is obliged to the bottle for all the wit and courage he has; 'tis not free and natural like yours.

Ran. He has more courage than wit, but wants neither.

Dap. As a pump gone dry, if you pour no water down you will get none out, so—

Ran. Nay, I bar similes too, to-night.

Dap. Why, is not the thought new? don't you apprehend it?

Ran. Yes, yes, but—

Dap. Well, well, will you comply with his sottishness too, and hate brisk things in complaisance to the ignorant dull age? I believe shortly 'twill be as hard to find a patient friend to communicate one's wit to, as a faithful friend to communicate one's secret to. Wit has as few true judges as painting, I see.

Ran. All people pretend to be judges of both.

Dap. Ay, they pretend; but set you aside, and one or two more—

Ran. But why, has Vincent neither courage nor wit?

Dap. He has no courage, because he beat his wench for giving me *les douces yeux* once; and no wit, because he does not comprehend my thoughts; and he is a son of a whore for his ignorance. I take ignorance worse from any man than the lie, because 'tis as much as to say I am no wit.

Re-enter VINCENT.

You need not take any notice, though, to him what I say.

Vin. Ranger, there is a woman below in a coach would speak with you.

Ran. With me! [*Exit* RANGER.

Dap. This Ranger, Mr. Vincent, is as false to his friend as his wench.

Vin. You have no reason to say so, but because he is absent.

Dap. 'Tis disobliging to tell a man of his faults to his face. If he had but your grave parts and manly wit, I should adore him; but, a pox! he is a mere buffoon, a jack-pudding, let me perish!

Vin. You are an ungrateful fellow. I have heard him maintain you had wit, which was more than e'er you could do for yourself.—I thought you had owned him your Mæcenas.

Dap. A pox! he cannot but esteem me, 'tis for his honour; but I cannot but be just for all that—without favour or affection. Yet I confess I love him so well, that I wish he had but the hundredth part of your courage.

Vin. He has had the courage to save you from many a beating, to my knowledge.

Dap. Come, come, I wish the man well, and, next to you, better than any man; and, I am sorry to say it, he has not courage to snuff a candle with his fingers. When he is drunk, indeed, he dares get a clap, or so—and swear at a constable.

Vin. Detracting fop! when did you see him desert his friend?

Dap. You have a rough kind of a raillery, Mr. Vincent; but since you will have it, (though I love the man heartily, I say,) he deserted me once in breaking of windows, for fear of the constables—

Re-enter RANGER.

But you need not take notice to him of what I tell you; I hate to put a man to the blush.

Ran. I have had just now a visit from my mistress, who is as jealous of me as a wife of her husband when she lies in:—my cousin Lydia,—you have heard me speak of her.

Vin. But she is more troublesome than a wife that lies in, because she follows you to your haunts. Why do you allow her that privilege before her time?

Ran. Faith, I may allow her any privilege, and be too hard for her yet. How do you think I have cheated her to-night?—Women are poor credulous creatures, easily deceived.

Vin. We are poor credulous creatures, when we think 'em so.

Ran. Intending a ramble to St. James's Park to-night, upon some probable hopes of some fresh game I have in chase, I appointed her to stay at home; with a promise to come to her within this hour, that she might not spoil the scent and prevent my sport.

Vin. She'll be even with you when you are married, I warrant you. In the mean time here's her health, Dapperwit.

Ran. Now had he rather be at the window, writing her anagram in the glass with his diamond, or biting his nails in the corner for a fine thought to come and divert us with at the table.

Dap. No, a pox! I have no wit to-night. I am as barren and hide-bound as one of your damned scribbling poets, who are sots in company for all their wit; as a miser is poor for all his money. How do you like the thought?

Vin. Drink, drink!

Dap. Well, I can drink this, because I shall be reprieved presently.

Vin. Who will be so civil to us?

Dap. Sir Simon Addleplot:—I have bespoke him a supper here, for he treats to-night a new rich mistress.

Ran. That spark, who has his fruitless designs upon the bed-ridden rich widow, down to the sucking heiress in her pissing-clout. He was once the sport, but now the public grievance, of all the fortunes in town; for he watches them like a younger brother that is afraid to be mumped of his snip, and they cannot steal a marriage, nor stay their stomachs, but he must know it.

Dap. He has now pitched his nets for Gripe's daughter, the rich scrivener, and serves him as a clerk to get admission to her; which the watchful fop her father denies to all others.

Ran. I thought you had been nibbling at her once, under pretence of love to her aunt.

Dap. I confess I have the same design yet, and Addleplot is but my agent whilst he thinks me his. He brings me letters constantly from her, and carries mine back.

Vin. Still betraying your best friends!

Dap. I cannot in honour but betray him. Let me perish! the poor young wench is taken with

my person, and would scratch through four walls to come to me.

Vin. 'Tis a sign she is kept up close indeed.

Dap. Betray him! I'll not be traitor to love for any man.

Enter Sir SIMON ADDLEPLOT *with the* Waiter.

Sir Sim. Know 'em! you are a saucy Jack-straw to question me, faith and troth; I know everybody, and everybody knows me.

All. Sir Simon! Sir Simon! Sir Simon!

Ran. And you are a welcome man to everybody.

Sir Sim. Now, son of a whore, do I know the gentlemen?—A dog! would have had a shilling of me before he would let me come to you!

Ran. The rogue has been bred at court, sure.—Get you out, sirrah. [*Exit* Waiter.

Sir Sim. He has been bred at a French-house, where they are more unreasonable.

Vin. Here's to you, sir Simon.

Sir Sim. I cannot drink, for I have a mistress within; though I would not have the people of the house to know it.

Ran. You need not be ashamed of your mistresses, for they are commonly rich.

Sir Sim. And because she is rich, I would conceal her; for I never had a rich mistress yet, but one or other got her from me presently, faith and troth.

Ran. But this is an ill place to conceal a mistress in; every waiter is an intelligencer to your rivals.

Sir Sim. I have a trick for that:—I'll let no waiters come into the room; I'll lay the cloth myself rather.

Ran. But who is your mistress?

Sir Sim. Your servant,—your servant, Mr. Ranger.

Vin. Come, will you pledge me?

Sir Sim. No, I'll spare your wine, if you will spare me Dapperwit's company; I came for that.

Vin. You do us a double favour, to take him and leave the wine.

Sir Sim. Come, come, Dapperwit.

Ran. Do not go, unless he will suffer us to see his mistress too. [*Aside to* DAPPERWIT.

Sir Sim. Come, come, man.

Dap. Would you have me so uncivil as to leave my company?—they'll take it ill.

Sir Sim. I cannot find her talk without thee.—Pray, gentlemen, persuade Mr. Dapperwit to go with me.

Ran. We will not hinder him of better company.

Dap. Yours is too good to be left rudely.

Sir Sim. Nay, gentlemen, I would desire your company too, if you knew the lady.

Dap. They know her as well as I; you say I know her not.

Sir Sim. You are not everybody.

Ran. Perhaps we do know the lady, sir Simon.

Sir Sim. You do not, you do not: none of you ever saw her in your lives;—but if you could be secret, and civil—

Ran. We have drunk yet but our bottle a-piece.

Sir Sim. But will you be civil, Mr. Vincent?

Ran. He dares not look a woman in the face under three bottles.

Sir Sim. Come along then. But can you be civil, gentlemen? will you be civil, gentlemen? pray be civil if you can, and you shall see her.

[*Exit, and returns with my* Lady FLIPPANT *and* Mrs. JOYNER.

Dap. How, has he got his jilt here! [*Aside.*

Ran. The widow Flippant! [*Aside.*

Vin. Is this the woman that we never saw! [*Aside.*

Flip. Does he bring us into company!—and Dapperwit one! Though I had married the fool, I thought to have reserved the wit as well as other ladies. [*Aside.*

Sir Sim. Nay, look as long as you will, madam, you will find them civil gentlemen, and good company.

Flip. I am not in doubt of their civility, but yours.

Joyn. You'll never leave snubbing your servants! Did you not promise to use him kindly?

[*Aside to* FLIPPANT.

Flip. [*Aside to* JOYNER.] 'Tis true.—[*Aloud.*] We wanted no good company, sir Simon, as long as we had yours.

Sir Sim. But they wanted good company, therefore I forced 'em to accept of yours.

Flip. They will not think the company good they were forced into, certainly.

Sir Sim. A pox! I must be using the words in fashion, though I never have any luck with 'em. Mrs. Joyner, help me off.

Joyn. I suppose, madam, he means the gentlemen wanted not inclination to your company, but confidence to desire so great an honour; therefore he forced 'em.

Dap. What makes this bawd here? Sure, mistress, you bawds should be like the small cards, though at first you make up a pack, yet, when the play begins, you should be put out as useless.

Joyn. Well, well, gibing companion: you would have the pimps kept in only? you would so?

Vin. What, they are quarrelling!

Ran. Pimp and bawd agree now-a-days like doctor and apothecary.

Sir Sim. Try, madam, if they are not civil gentlemen: talk with 'em, while I go lay the cloth—no waiter comes here.—[*Aside.*] My mother used to tell me, I should avoid all occasions of talking before my mistress, because silence is a sign of love as well as prudence. [*Lays the cloth.*

Flip. Methinks you look a little yellow on't, Mr. Dapperwit. I hope you do not censure me because you find me passing away a night with this fool:—he is not a man to be jealous of, sure.

Dap. You are not a lady to be jealous of, sure.

Flip. No, certainly.—But why do you look as if you were jealous then?

Dap. If I had met you in Whetstone's-park, with a drunken foot-soldier, I should not have been jealous of you.

Flip. Fy, fy! now you are jealous, certainly; for people always, when they grow jealous, grow rude:—but I can pardon it since it proceeds from love certainly.

Dap. I am out of all hopes to be rid of this eternal old acquaintance: when I jeer her, she thinks herself praised; now I call her whore in plain English, she thinks I am jealous. [*Aside.*

Flip. Sweet Mr. Dapperwit, be not so censorious, (I speak for your sake, not my own,) for jealousy is a torment, but my honour cannot suffer certainly.

Dap. No, certainly; but the greatest torment I have is—your love.

Flip. Alas! sweet Mr. Dapperwit, indeed love is a torment: but 'tis a sweet torment; but jealousy is a bitter torment.—I do not go about to cure you of the torment of my love.

Dap. 'Tis a sign so.

Flip. Come, come, look up, man; is that a rival to contest with you?

Dap. I will contest with no rival, not with my old rival your coachman; but they have heartily my resignation; and, to do you a favour, but myself a greater, I will help tie the knot you are fumbling for now, betwixt your cully here and you.

Flip. Go, go, I take that kind of jealousy worst of all, to suspect I would be debauched to beastly matrimony.—But who are those gentlemen, pray? are they men of fortunes, Mrs. Joyner?

Joyn. I believe so.

Flip. Do you believe so, indeed?—Gentlemen— [*Advancing towards* RANGER *and* VINCENT.

Ran. If the civility we owe to ladies had not controlled our envy to Mr. Dapperwit, we had interrupted ere this your private conversation.

Flip. Your interruption, sir, had been most civil and obliging;—for our discourse was of marriage.

Ran. That is a subject, madam, as grateful as common.

Flip. O fy, fy! are you of that opinion too? I cannot suffer any to talk of it in my company.

Ran. Are you married then, madam?

Flip. No, certainly.

Ran. I am sure so much beauty cannot despair of it.

Flip. Despair of it!—

Ran. Only those that are married, or cannot be married, hate to hear of marriage.

Flip. Yet you must know, sir, my aversion to marriage is such, that you, nor no man breathing, shall ever persuade me to it.

Ran. Cursed be the man should do so rude a thing as to persuade you to anything against your inclination! I would not do it for the world, madam.

Flip. Come, come, though you seem to be a civil gentleman, I think you no better than your neighbours. I do not know a man of you all that will not thrust a woman up into a corner, and then talk an hour to her impertinently of marriage.

Ran. You would find me another man in a corner, I assure you, madam; for you should not have a word of marriage from me, whatsoever you might find in my actions of it; I hate talking as much as you.

Flip. I hate it extremely.

Ran. I am your man then, madam; for I find just the same fault with your sex as you do with ours:—I ne'er could have to do with woman in my life, but still she would be impertinently talking of marriage to me.

Flip. Observe that, Mrs. Joyner.

Dap. Pray, Mr. Ranger, let's go; I had rather drink with Mr. Vincent, than stay here with you; besides 'tis Park-time.

Ran. [*To* DAPPERWIT.] I come.—[*To* FLIPPANT.] Since you are a lady that hate marriage, I'll do you the service to withdraw the company; for those that hate marriage hate loss of time.

Flip. Will you go then, sir? but before you go, sir, pray tell me is your aversion to marriage real?

Ran. As real as yours.

Flip. If it were no more real than mine— [*Aside.*

Ran. Your servant, madam. [*Turns to go.*

Flip. But do you hate marriage certainly? [*Plucks him back.*

Ran. Certainly.

Flip. Come, I cannot believe it: you dissemble it only because I pretend it.

Ran. Do you but pretend it then, madam?

Flip. [*Aside*] I shall discover myself—[*Aloud*] I mean, because I hold against it, you do the same in complaisance:—for I have heard say, cunning men think to bring the coy and untractable women to tameness as they do some mad people—by humouring their frenzies.

Ran. I am none of those cunning men, yet have too much wit to entertain the presumption of designing upon you.

Flip. 'Twere no such presumption neither.

Dap. Come away; 'sdeath! don't you see your danger?

Ran. Those aims are for sir Simon.—Good night, madam.

Flip. Will you needs go, then?—[*To* SIR SIMON] The gentlemen are a going, sir Simon; will you let 'em?

Sir Sim. Nay, madam, if you cannot keep 'em, how should I?

Flip. Stay, sir; because you hate marriage, I'll sing you a new song against it. [*Sings.*

A spouse I do hate,
For either she's false or she's jealous;
But give us a mate
Who nothing will ask us or tell us.

She stands on no terms,
Nor chaffers, by way of indenture,
Her love for your farms;
But takes her kind man at a venture.

If all prove not right,
Without an act, process, or warning,
From wife for a night
You may be divorced in the morning.

When parents are slaves,
Their brats cannot be any other;
Great wits and great braves
Have always a punk to their mother.

Though it be the fashion for women of quality to sing any song whatever, because the words are not distinguished, yet I should have blushed to have done it now, but for you, sir.

Ran. The song is edifying, the voice admirable—and, once more, I am your servant, madam.

Flip. What, will you go too, Mr. Dapperwit?

Sir Sim. Pray, Mr. Dapperwit, do not you go too.

Dap. I am engaged.

Sir Sim. Well, if we cannot have their company, we will not have their room: ours is a private back-room; they have paid their reckoning, let's go thither again.

Flip. But pray, sweet Mr. Dapperwit, do not go. Keep him, Sir Simon.

Sir Sim. I cannot keep him. [*Exeunt* VINCENT, RANGER, *and* DAPPERWIT.

It is impossible; (the world is so;)
One cannot keep one's friend, and mistress too. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*St. James's Park, at Night.*

Enter RANGER, VINCENT, *and* DAPPERWIT.

Ran. Hang me, if I am not pleased extremely with this new-fashioned caterwauling, this midnight coursing in the Park.

Vin. A man may come after supper with his three bottles in his head, reel himself sober, without reproof from his mother, aunt, or grave relation.

Ran. May bring his bashful wench, and not have her put out of countenance by the impudent honest women of the town.

Dap. And a man of wit may have the better of the dumb show of well-trimmed vest or fair peruke:—no man's now is whitest.

Ran. And now no woman's modest or proud; for her blushes are hid, and the rubies on her lips are died, and all sleepy and glimmering eyes have lost their attraction.

Vin. And now a man may carry a bottle under his arm instead of his hat;—and no observing spruce fop will miss the cravat that lies on one's shoulder, or count the pimples on one's face.

Dap. And now the brisk repartee ruins the complaisant cringe, or wise grimace.—Something 'twas, we men of virtue always loved the night.

Ran. O blessed season!

Vin. For good-fellows.

Ran. For lovers.

Dap. And for the Muses.

Ran. When I was a boy I loved the night so well, I had a strong vocation to be a bellman's apprentice.

Vin. I, a drawer.

Dap. And I, to attend the waits of Westminster, let me perish!

Ran. But why do we not do the duty of this and such other places;—walk, censure, and speak ill of all we meet?

Dap. 'Tis no fault of mine, let me perish!

Vin. Fy, fy! satirical gentlemen, this is not your time; you cannot distinguish a friend from a fop.

Dap. No matter, no matter; they will deserve amongst 'em the worst we can say.

Ran. Who comes here, Dapperwit?

[*People walking slowly over the stage.*

Dap. By the toss of his head, training of his feet, and his elbows playing at bo-peep behind his back, it should be my lord Easy.

Ran. And who the woman?

Dap. My Lord what-d'ye-call's daughter, that had a child by—

Vin. Dapperwit, hold your tongue.

Ran. How! are you concerned?

Vin. Her brother's an honest fellow, and will drink his glass.

Ran. Prithee, Vincent, Dapperwit did not hinder drinking to-night, though he spake against it; why, then, should you interrupt his sport?—Now, let him talk of anybody.

Vin. So he will,—till you cut his throat.

Ran. Why should you on all occasions thwart him, contemn him, and maliciously look grave at his jests only?

Vin. Why does he always rail against my friends, then, and my best friend—a beer-glass?

Ran. Dapperwit, be your own advocate: my game, I think, is before me there. [*Exit.*

Dap. This Ranger, I think, has all the ill qualities of all your town fops;—leaving his company for a spruce lord or a wench.

Vin. Nay, if you must rail at your own best friends, I may forgive you railing at mine.

Enter LYDIA *and my* Lady FLIPPANT.—*They walk over the stage.*

Lyd. False Ranger, shall I find thee here? [*Aside.*

Vin. Those are women, are they not? [*To* DAPPERWIT.

Dap. The least seems to be my Lucy, sure. [*Aside.*

Vin. Faith, I think I dare speak to a woman in the dark!—let's try.

Dap. They are persons of quality of my acquaintance;—hold!

Vin. Nay, if they are persons of quality of your acquaintance, I may be the bolder with 'em.

[*The ladies go off, they follow them.*

Re-enter LYDIA *and my* Lady FLIPPANT.

Lyd. I come hither to make a discovery to-night.

Flip. Of my love to you, certainly; for nobody but you could have debauched me to the Park, certainly. I would not return another night, if it were to redeem my dear husband from his grave.

Lyd. I believe you:—but to get another, widow.

Flip. Another husband, another husband, foh!

Lyd. There does not pass a night here but many a match is made.

Flip. That a woman of honour should have the word match in her mouth!—but I hope, madam, the fellows do not make honourable love here, do they? I abominate honourable love, upon my honour.

Lyd. If they should make honourable love here, I know you would prevent 'em.

Re-enter VINCENT *and* DAPPERWIT.—*They walk slowly towards the ladies.*

But here come two men will inform you what to do.

Flip. Do they come?—are they men certainly?

Lyd. Prepare for an assault, they'll put you to 't.

Flip. Will they put us to't certainly? I was never put to't yet. If they should put us to't, I should drop down, down, certainly.

Lyd. I believe, truly, you would not have power to run away.

Flip. Therefore I will not stay the push.—They come! they come! oh, the fellows come!

[FLIPPANT *runs away*, LYDIA *follows, and* VINCENT *and* DAPPERWIT *after them.*

Re-enter FLIPPANT *at the other door, alone.*

Flip. So! I am got off clear! I did not run from the men, but my companion. For all their brags, men have hardly courage to set upon us when our number is equal; now they shall see I defy 'em:—for we women have always most courage when we are alone. But, a pox! the lazy rogues come not;

or they are drunk and cannot run. Oh drink! abominable drink! instead of inflaming love, it quenches it; and for one lover it encourages, it makes a thousand impotent. Curse on all wine! even Rhenish wine and sugar—

Enter ADDLEPLOT, *muffled in a cloak.*

But fortune will not see me want; here comes a single bully,—I wish he may stand;—

For now a-nights the jostling nymph is bolder
Than modern satyr with his cloak o'er shoulder.

Well met, sir. [*She puts on her mask.*

Sir Sim. How shall I know that, forsooth? Who are you? do you know me?

Flip. Who are you? don't you know me?

Sir Sim. Not I, faith and troth!

Flip. I am glad on't; for no man e'er liked a woman the better for having known her before.

Sir Sim. Ay, but then one can't be so free with a new acquaintance as with an old one; she may deny one the civility.

Flip. Not till you ask her.

Sir Sim. But I am afraid to be denied.

Flip. Let me tell you, sir, you cannot disoblige us women more than in distrusting us.

Sir Sim. Pish! what should one ask for, when you know one's meaning?—but shall I deal freely with you?

Flip. I love, of my life, men should deal freely with me; there are so few men will deal freely with one—

Sir Sim. Are you not a fireship, a punk, madam?

Flip. Well, sir, I love raillery.

Sir Sim. Faith and troth, I do not rally, I deal freely.

Flip. This is the time and place for freedom, sir.

Sir Sim. Are you handsome?

Flip. Joan's as good as my lady in the dark, certainly: but men that deal freely never ask questions, certainly.

Sir Sim. How then! I thought to deal freely, and put a woman to the question, had been all one.

Flip. But, let me tell you, those that deal freely indeed, take a woman by—

Sir Sim. What, what, what, what?

Flip. By the hand—and lead her aside.

Sir Sim. Now I understand you; come along then.

Enter behind Musicians *with torches.*

Flip. What unmannerly rascals are those that bring light into the Park? 'twill not be taken well from 'em by the women, certainly.—[*Aside.*] Still disappointed!

Sir Sim. Oh, the fiddles, the fiddles! I sent for them hither to oblige the women, not to offend 'em; for I intend to serenade the whole Park to-night. But my frolic is not without an intrigue, faith and troth: for I know the fiddles will call the whole herd of vizard masks together; and then shall I discover if a strayed mistress of mine be not amongst 'em, whom I treated to-night at the French-house; but as soon as the jilt had eat up my meat and drunk her two bottles, she ran away from me, and left me alone.

Flip. How! is it he! Addleplot!—that I could not know him by his faith and troth! [*Aside.*

Sir Sim. Now I would understand her tricks; because I intend to marry her, and should be glad to know what I must trust to.

Flip. So thou shalt;—but not yet. [*Aside.*

Sir Sim. Though I can give a great guess already; for if I have any intrigue or sense in me, she is as arrant a jilt as ever pulled pillow from under husband's head, faith and troth. Moreover she is bow-legged, hopper-hipped, and, betwixt pomatum and Spanish red, has a complexion like a Holland cheese, and no more teeth left, than such as give a *haut goût* to her breath; but she is rich, faith and troth.

Flip. [*Aside.*] Oh rascal! he has heard somebody else say all this of me. But I must not discover myself, lest I should be disappointed of my revenge; for I will marry him.

[*The* Musicians *approaching, exit* FLIPPANT.

Sir Sim. What, gone!—come then, strike up, my lads.

[*Enter Men and women in vizards—a Dance, during which* ADDLEPLOT, *for the most part, stands still in a cloak and vizard; but sometimes goes about peeping, and examining the women's clothes—the Dance ended, all exeunt.*

Re-enter FLIPPANT *and* LYDIA, *after them* VINCENT *and* DAPPERWIT.

Flip. [*To* LYDIA.] Nay, if you stay any longer, I must leave you again. [FLIPPANT *going off.*

Vin. We have overtaken them at last again. These are they: they separate too; and that's but a challenge to us.

Dap. Let me perish! ladies—

Lyd. Nay good madam, let's unite, now here's the common enemy upon us.

Vin. Damn me! ladies—

Dap. Hold, a pox! you are too rough.—Let me perish! ladies—

Lyd. Not for want of breath, gentlemen:—we'll stay rather.

Dap. For want of your favour rather, sweet ladies.

Flip. [*Aside.*] That's Dapperwit, false villain! but he must not know I am here. If he should, I should lose his thrice agreeable company, and he would run from me as fast as from the bailiffs. [*To* LYDIA.] What! you will not talk with 'em, I hope?

Lyd. Yes, but I will.

Flip. Then you are a Park-woman, certainly; and you will take it kindly if I leave you.

Lyd. No, you must not leave me.

Flip. Then you must leave them.

Lyd. I'll see if they are worse company than you, first.

Flip. Monstrous impudence!—will you not come? [*Pulls* LYDIA.

Vin. Nay, madam, I never suffer any violence to be used to a woman but what I do myself: she must stay, and you must not go.

Flip. Unhand me, you rude fellow!

Vin. Nay, now I am sure you will stay and be kind; for coyness in a woman is as little sign of true modesty, as huffing in a man is of true courage.

Dap. Use her gently, and speak soft things to her.

Lyd. [*Aside.*] Now I do guess I know my coxcomb.—[*To* DAPPERWIT.] Sir, I am extremely glad I am fallen into the hands of a gentleman that can speak soft things; and this is so fine a night to hear soft things in;—morning, I should have said.

Dap. It will not be morning, dear madam, till

you pull off your mask.—[*Aside.*] That I think was brisk.

Lyd. Indeed, dear sir, my face would frighten back the sun.

Dap. With glories more radiant than his own:—[*Aside.*] I keep up with her, I think.

Lyd. But why would you put me to the trouble of lighting the world; when I thought to have gone to sleep?

Dap. You only can do it, dear madam, let me perish!

Lyd. But why would you (of all men) practise treason against your friend Phœbus, and depose him for a mere stranger?

Dap. I think she knows me. [*Aside.*

Lyd. But he does not do you justice, I believe; and you are so positively cock-sure of your wit, you would refer to a mere stranger your plea to the bay-tree.

Dap. She jeers me, let me perish! [*Aside.*

Vin. Dapperwit, a little of your aid; for my lady's invincibly dumb.

Dap. Would mine had been so too! [*Aside.*

Vin. I have used as many arguments to make her speak, as are requisite to make other women hold their tongues.

Dap. Well, I am ready to change sides.—Yet before I go, madam, since the moon consents now I should see your face, let me desire you to pull off your mask; which to a handsome lady is a favour, I'm sure.

Lyd. Truly, sir, I must not be long in debt to you for the obligation; pray let me hear you recite some of your verses; which to a wit is a favour, I'm sure.

Dap. Madam, it belongs to your sex to be obliged first; pull off your mask, and I'll pull out my paper.—[*Aside.*] Brisk again, of my side.

Lyd. 'Twould be in vain, for you would want a candle now.

Dap. [*Aside.*] I dare not make use again of the lustre of her face.—[*To* LYDIA.] I'll wait upon you home then, madam.

Lyd. Faith, no; I believe it will not be much to our advantages to bring my face or your poetry to light: for I hope you have yet a pretty good opinion of my face, and so have I of your wit. But if you are for proving your wit, why do not you write a play?

Dap. Because 'tis now no more reputation to write a play, than it is honour to be a knight. Your true wit despises the title of poet, as much as your true gentleman the title of knight; for as a man may be a knight and no gentleman, so a man may be a poet and no wit, let me perish!

Lyd. Pray, sir, how are you dignified or distinguished amongst the rates of wits? and how many rates are there?

Dap. There are as many degrees of wits as of lawyers: as there is first your solicitor, then your attorney, then your pleading-counsel, then your chamber-counsel, and then your judge; so there is first your court-wit, your coffee-wit, your poll-wit, or politic-wit, your chamber-wit, or scribble-wit, and last of all, your judge-wit, or critic.

Lyd. But are there as many wits as lawyers? Lord, what will become of us!—What employment can they have? how are they known?

Dap. First, your court-wit is a fashionable, insinuating, flattering, cringing, grimacing fellow—and has wit enough to solicit a suit of love; and if he fail, he has malice enough to ruin the woman with a dull lampoon:—but he rails still at the man that is absent, for you must know all wits rail; and his wit properly lies in combing perukes, matching ribbons, and being severe, as they call it, upon other people's clothes.

Lyd. Now, what is the coffee-wit?

Dap. He is a lying, censorious, gossiping, quibbling wretch, and sets people together by the ears over that sober drink, coffee: he is a wit, as he is a commentator, upon the Gazette; and he rails at the pirates of Algier, the Grand Signior of Constantinople, and the Christian Grand Signior.

Lyd. What kind of wit is your poll-wit?

Dap. He is a fidgetting, busy, dogmatical, hot-headed fop, that speaks always in sentences and proverbs, (as other in similitudes,) and he rails perpetually against the present government. His wit lies in projects and monopolies, and penning speeches for young parliament men.

Lyd. But what is your chamber-wit, or scribble wit?

Dap. He is a poring, melancholy, modest sot, ashamed of the world: he searches all the records of wit, to compile a breviate of them for the use of players, printers, booksellers, and sometimes cooks, tobacco-men; he employs his railing against the ignorance of the age, and all that have more money than he.

Lyd. Now your last.

Dap. Your judge-wit, or critic, is all these together, and yet has the wit to be none of them: he can think, speak, write, as well as the rest, but scorns (himself a judge) to be judged by posterity: he rails at all the other classes of wits, and his wit lies in damning all but himself:—he is your true wit.

Lyd. Then, I suspect you are of his form.

Dap. I cannot deny it, madam.

Vin. Dapperwit, you have been all this time on the wrong side; for you love to talk all, and here's a lady would not have hindered you.

Dap. A pox! I have been talking too long indeed here; for wit is lost upon a silly weak woman, as well as courage. [*Aside.*

Vin. I have used all common means to move a woman's tongue and mask; I called her ugly, old, and old acquaintance, and yet she would not disprove me:—but here comes Ranger, let him try what he can do; for, since my mistress is dogged, I'll go sleep alone. [*Exit.*

Re-enter RANGER.

Lyd. [*Aside.*] Ranger! 'tis he indeed: I am sorry he is here, but glad I discovered him before I went. Yet he must not discover me, lest I should be prevented hereafter in finding him out. False Ranger!—[*To* FLIPPANT.] Nay, if they bring fresh force upon us, madam, 'tis time to quit the field. [*Exeunt* LYDIA *and* FLIPPANT.

Ran. What, play with your quarry till it fly from you!

Dap. You frighten it away.

Ran. Ha! is not one of those ladies in mourning?

Dap. All women are so by this light.

Ran. But you might easily discern it—don't you know her?

Dap. No.

Ran. Did you talk with her?

Dap. Yes, she is one of your brisk silly baggages.

Ran. 'Tis she, 'tis she!—I was afraid I saw her before; let us follow 'em: prithee make haste.—[*Aside.*] 'Tis Lydia. [*Exeunt.*

Re-enter, at the other door, LYDIA *and my* Lady FLIPPANT —DAPPERWIT *and* RANGER *following them at a distance.*

Lyd. They follow us yet, I fear.

Flip. You do not fear it, certainly; otherwise you would not have encouraged them.

Lyd. For Heaven's sake, madam, waive your quarrel a little, and let us pass by your coach, and so on foot to your acquaintance in the old Pall-mall: for I would not be discovered by the man that came up last to us. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—CHRISTINA'S *Lodging.*

Enter CHRISTINA *and* ISABEL.

Isa. For Heaven's sake, undress yourself, madam! They'll not return to-night: all people have left the Park an hour ago.

Chri. What is't o'clock?

Isa. 'Tis past one.

Chri. It cannot be!

Isa. I thought that time had only stolen from happy lovers:—the disconsolate have nothing to do but to tell the clock.

Chri. I can only keep account with my misfortunes.

Isa. I am glad they are not innumerable.

Chri. And, truly, my undergoing so often your impertinency is not the least of them.

Isa. I am then more glad, madam, for then they cannot be great; and it is in my power, it seems, to make you in part happy, if I could but hold this villanous tongue of mine: but then let the people of the town hold their tongues if they will, for I cannot but tell you what they say.

Chri. What do they say?

Isa. Faith, madam, I am afraid to tell you, now I think on't.

Chri. Is it so ill?

Isa. O, such base, unworthy things!

Chri. Do they say I was really Clerimont's wench, as he boasted; and that the ground of the quarrel betwixt Valentine and him was not Valentine's vindication of my honour, but Clerimont's jealousy of him?

Isa. Worse, worse a thousand times!—such villanous things to the utter ruin of your reputation!

Chri. What are they?

Isa. Faith, madam, you'll be angry: 'tis the old trick of lovers to hate their informers, after they have made 'em such.

Chri. I will not be angry.

Isa. They say then, since Mr. Valentine's flying into France, you are grown mad, have put yourself into mourning, live in a dark room, where you'll see nobody, nor take any rest day or night, but rave and talk to yourself perpetually.

Chri. Now, what else?

Isa. But the surest sign of your madness is, they say, because you are desperately resolved (in case my lord Clerimont should die of his wounds) to transport yourself and fortune into France to Mr. Valentine: a man that has not a groat to return you in exchange.

Chri. All this, hitherto, is true; now to the rest.

Isa. Indeed, madam, I have no more to tell you. I was sorry, I'm sure, to hear so much of any lady of mine.

Chri. Insupportable insolence!

Isa. [*Aside.*] This is some revenge for my want of sleep to-night.—[*Knocking at the door.*] So, I hope my old second is come; 'tis seasonable relief. [*Exit.*

Chri. Unhappy Valentine! couldst thou but see how soon thy absence and misfortunes have disbanded all thy friends, and turned thy slaves all renegadoes, thou sure wouldst prize my only faithful heart!

Enter my Lady FLIPPANT, LYDIA, *and* ISABEL.

Flip. Hail, faithful shepherdess! but, truly, I had not kept my word with you, in coming back to-night, if it had not been for this lady, who has her intrigues too with the fellows as well as you.

Lyd. Madam, under my lady Flippant's protection, I am confident to beg yours; being just now pursued out of the Park by a relation of mine, by whom it imports me extremely not to be discovered:—[*Knocking at the door.*] but I fear he is now at the door.—[*To* ISABEL, *who goes out.*] Let me desire you to deny me to him courageously;—for he will hardly believe he can be mistaken in me.

Chri. In such an occasion, where impudence is requisite, she will serve you as faithfully as you can wish, madam.

Flip. Come, come, madam, do not upbraid her with her assurance, a qualification that only fits her for a lady's service. A fine woman of the town can be no more without a woman that can make an excuse with assurance, than she can be without a glass, certainly.

Chri. She needs no advocate.

Flip. How can any one alone manage an amorous intrigue? though the birds are tame, somebody must help draw the net. If 'twere not for a woman that could make an excuse with assurance, how should we wheedle, jilt, trace, discover, countermine, undermine, and blow up the stinking fellows? which is all the pleasure I receive, or design by them; for I never admitted a man to my conversation, but for his punishment, certainly.

Chri. Nobody will doubt that, certainly.

Re-enter ISABEL.

Isa. Madam, the gentleman will not be mistaken: he says you are here, he saw you come in; he is your relation, his name's Ranger, and is come to wait upon you home. I had much ado to keep him from coming up.

Lyd. [*To* CHRISTINA.] Madam, for Heaven's sake, help me! 'tis yet in your power; if but, while I retire into your dining-room, you will please to personate me, and own yourself for her he pursued out of the Park: you are in mourning too, and your stature so much mine it will not contradict you.

Chri. I am sorry, madam, I must dispute any command of yours. I have made a resolution to see the face of no man, till an unfortunate friend of mine, now out of the kingdom, return.

Lyd. By that friend, and by the hopes you have to see him, let me conjure you to keep me

from the sight of mine now. Dear madam, let your charity prevail over your superstition.

Isa. He comes, he comes, madam!

[LYDIA *withdraws, and stands unseen at the door.*

Enter RANGER.

Ran. Ha! this is no Lydia. [*Aside.*

Chri. What, unworthy defamer! has encouraged you to offer this insolence?

Ran. She is liker Lydia in her style than her face. I see I am mistaken; but to tell her I followed her for another, were an affront rather than an excuse. She's a glorious creature! [*Aside.*

Chri. Tell me, sir, whence had you reason for this your rude pursuit of me, into my lodgings, my chamber? why should you follow me?

Ran. Faith, madam, because you run away from me.

Chri. That was no sign of an acquaintance.

Ran. You'll pardon me, madam.

Chri. Then, it seems, you mistook me for another, and the night is your excuse, which blots out all distinctions. But now you are satisfied in your mistake, I hope you will seek out your woman in another place.

Ran. Madam, I allow not the excuse you make for me. If I have offended, I will rather be condemned for my love, than pardoned for my insensibility.

Lyd. How's that? [*Aside.*

Chri. What do you say?

Ran. Though the night had been darker, my heart would not have suffered me to follow any one but you:—he has been too long acquainted with you to mistake you.

Lyd. What means this tenderness? he mistook me for her sure. [*Aside.*

Chri. What says the gentleman? did you know me then, sir?

Ran. [*Aside.*] Not I, the devil take me! but I must on now.—[*Aloud.*] Could you imagine, madam, by the innumerable crowd of your admirers, you had left any man free in the town, or ignorant of the power of your beauty?

Chri. I never saw your face before, that I remember.

Ran. Ah, madam! you would never regard your humblest slave; I was till now a modest lover.

Lyd. Falsest of men! [*Aside.*

Chri. My woman said, you came to seek a relation here, not a mistress.

Ran. I must confess, madam, I thought you would sooner disprove my dissembled error, than admit my visit, and was resolved to see you.

Lyd. 'Tis clear! [*Aside.*

Ran. Indeed, when I followed you first out of the Park, I was afraid you might have been a certain relation of mine, for your statures and habits are the same; but when you entered here, I was with joy convinced. Besides, I would not for the world have given her troublesome love so much encouragement, to have disturbed my future addresses to you; for the foolish woman does perpetually torment me to make our relation nearer; but never more in vain than since I have seen you, madam.

Lyd. How! shall I suffer this? 'tis clear he disappointed me to-night for her, and made me stay at home, that I might not disappoint him of her company in the Park. [*Aside.*

Chri. I am amazed! but let me tell you, sir, if the lady were here, I would satisfy her the sight of me should never frustrate her ambitious designs upon her cruel kinsman.

Lyd. I wish you could satisfy me. [*Aside.*

Ran. If she were here, she would satisfy you she were not capable of the honour to be taken for you:—though in the dark. Faith, my cousin is but a tolerable woman to a man that had not seen you.

Chri. Sure, to my plague, this is the first time you ever saw me!

Ran. Sure, to the plague of my poor heart, 'tis not the hundredth time I have seen you! For, since the time I saw you first, you have not been at the Park, playhouse, Exchange, or other public place, but I saw you; for it was my business to watch and follow.

Chri. Pray, when did you see me last at the Park, playhouse, or Exchange?

Ran. Some two, three days, or a week ago.

Chri. I have not been this month out of this chamber.

Lyd. That is to delude me. [*Aside.*

Chri. I knew you were mistaken.

Ran. You'll pardon a lover's memory, madam. —[*Aside.*] A pox! I have hanged myself in my own line. One would think my perpetual ill-luck in lying should break me of the quality; but, like a losing gamester, I am still for pushing on, till none will trust me.

Chri. Come, sir, you run out of one error into a greater: you would excuse the rudeness of your mistake, and intrusion at this hour into my lodgings, with your gallantry to me,—more unseasonable and offensive.

Ran. Nay, I am in love I see, for I blush and have not a word to say for myself.

Chri. But, sir, if you will needs play the gallant, pray leave my house before morning, lest you should be seen go hence, to the scandal of my honour. Rather than that should be, I'll call up the house and neighbours to bear witness I bid you begone.

Ran. Since you take a night visit so ill, madam, I will never wait upon you again but by day. I go, that I may hope to return; and, for once, I wish you a good night without me.

Chri. Good night, for as long as I live.

[*Exit* RANGER.

Lyd. And good night to my love, I'm sure. [*Aside.*

Chri. Though I have done you an inconsiderable service, I assure you, madam, you are not a little obliged to me.—[*Aside.*] Pardon me, dear Valentine!

Lyd. I know not yet whether I am more obliged than injured: when I do, I assure you, madam, I shall not be insensible of either.

Chri. I fear, madam, you are as liable to mistakes as your kinsman.

Lyd. I fear I am more subject to 'em: it may be for want of sleep, therefore I'll go home.

Chri. My lady Flippant, good night.

Flip. Good night, or rather good morrow, faithful shepherdess.

Chri. I'll wait on you down.

Lyd. Your coach stays yet, I hope.

Flip. Certainly. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Street before* CHRISTINA'S *Lodging.*

Enter RANGER *and* DAPPERWIT.

Dap. I was a faithful sentinel: nobody came out, let me perish!

Ran. No, no, I hunted upon a wrong scent; I thought I had followed a woman, but found her an angel.

Dap. What is her name?

Ran. That you must tell me. What very fine woman is there lives hereabouts?

Dap. Faith, I know not any. She is, I warrant you, some fine woman of a term's standing or so in the town; such as seldom appear in public, but in their balconies, where they stand so constantly, one would think they had hired no other part of the house.

Ran. And look like the pictures which painters expose to draw in customers;—but I must know who she is. Vincent's lodging is hard by, I'll go and inquire of him, and lie with him to-night: but if he will not let me, I'll lie with you, for my lodging is too far off.

Dap. Then I will go before, and expect you at mine. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—VINCENT'S *Lodging.*

Enter VINCENT, *and* VALENTINE *in a riding habit, as newly from a journey.*

Vin. Your mistress, dear Valentine, will not be more glad to see you! but my wonder is no less than my joy, that you would return ere you were informed Clerimont were out of danger. His surgeons themselves have not been assured of his recovery till within these two days.

Val. I feared my mistress, not my life. My life I could trust again with my old enemy fortune; but no longer my mistress in the hands of my greater enemies, her relations.

Vin. Your fear was in the wrong place, then: for though my lord Clerimont live, he and his relations may put you in more danger of your life than your mistress's relations can of losing her.

Val. Would any could secure her! I would myself secure my life, for I should value it then.

Vin. Come, come; her relations can do you no hurt. I dare swear, if her mother should but say, *Your hat did not cock handsomely*, she would never ask her blessing again.

Val. Prithee leave thy fooling, and tell me, if, since my departure, she has given evidences of her love, to clear those doubts I went away with:—for as absence is the bane of common and bastard love, 'tis the vindication of that which is true and generous.

Vin. Nay, if you could ever doubt her love, you deserve to doubt on; for there is no punishment great enough for jealousy—but jealousy.

Val. You may remember, I told you before my flight I had quarrelled with the defamer of my mistress, but I thought I had killed my rival.

Vin. But pray give me now the answer, which the suddenness of your flight denied me;—how could Clerimont hope to subdue her heart by the assault of her honour?

Val. Pish! it might be the stratagem of a rival to make me desist.

Vin. For shame! if 'twere not rather to vindicate her, than satisfy you, I would not tell you how like a Penelope she has behaved herself in your absence.

Val. Let me know.

Vin. Then know, the next day you went she put herself in mourning, and—

Val. That might be for Clerimont, thinking him dead, as all the world besides thought.

Vin. Still turning the dagger's point on yourself! hear me out. I say she put herself into mourning for you—locked herself in her chamber this month for you—shut out her barking relations for you — has not seen the sun or the face of man since she saw you—thinks and talks of nothing but you — sends to me daily to hear of you — and, in short, (I think,) is mad for you. All this I can swear; for I am to her so near a neighbour, and so inquisitive a friend for you—

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Ranger, sir, is coming up.

Vin. What brings him now? he comes to lie with me.

Val. Who, Ranger?

Vin. Yes. Pray retire a little, till I send him off:—unless you have a mind to have your arrival published to-morrow in the coffee-houses.

[VALENTINE *retires to the door behind.*

Enter RANGER.

Ran. What! not yet a-bed? your man is laying you to sleep with usquebaugh or brandy; is he not so?

Vin. What punk will not be troubled with you to-night, therefore I am?—is it not so?

Ran. I have been turned out of doors, indeed, just now, by a woman,—but such a woman, Vincent!

Vin. Yes, yes, your women are always such women!

Ran. A neighbour of yours, and I'm sure the finest you have.

Vin. Prithee do not asperse my neighbourhood with your acquaintance; 'twould bring a scandal upon an alley.

Ran. Nay, I do not know her; therefore I come to you.

Vin. 'Twas no wonder she turned you out of doors, then; and if she had known you, 'twould have been a wonder she had let you stay. But where does she live?

Ran. Five doors off, on the right hand.

Vin. Pish! pish!—

Ran. What's the matter?

Vin. Does she live there, do you say?

Ran. Yes; I observed them exactly, that my account from you might be exact. Do you know who lives there?

Vin. Yes, so well, that I know you are mistaken.

Ran. Is she not a young lady scarce eighteen, of extraordinary beauty, her stature next to low, and in mourning?

Val. What is this? [*Aside.*

Vin. She is; but if you saw her, you broke in at window.

Ran. I chased her home from the Park, indeed,

taking her for another lady who had some claim to my heart, till she showed a better title to 't.

Vin. Hah! hah! hah!

Val. Was she at Park, then? and have I a new rival? [*Aside.*

Vin. From the Park did you follow her, do you say?—I knew you were mistaken.

Ran. I tell you I am not.

Vin. If you are sure it was that house, it might be perhaps her woman stolen to the Park, unknown to her lady.

Ran. My acquaintance does usually begin with the maid first, but now 'twas with the mistress, I assure you.

Vin. The mistress!—I tell you she has not been out of her doors since Valentine's flight. She is his mistress,—the great heiress Christina.

Ran. I tell you then again, I followed that Christina from the Park home, where I talked with her half an hour, and intend to see her to-morrow again.

Val. Would she talk with him too! [*Aside.*

Vin. It cannot be.

Ran. Christina do you call her? Faith I am sorry she is an heiress, lest it should bring the scandal of interest, and the design of lucre, upon my love.

Vin. No, no, her face and virtues will free you from that censure. But, however, 'tis not fairly done to rival your friend Valentine in his absence; and when he is present you know 'twill be dangerous, by my lord Clerimont's example. Faith, if you have seen her, I would not advise you to attempt it again.

Ran. You may be merry, sir, you are not in love; your advice I come not for, nor will I for your assistance.—Good night. [*Exit.*

Val. Here's your Penelope! the woman that had not seen the sun, nor face of man, since my departure! for it seems she goes out in the night, when the sun is absent, and faces are not distinguished.

Vin. Why! do you believe him?

Val. Should I believe you?

Vin. 'Twere more for your interest, and you would be less deceived. If you believe him, you must doubt the chastity of all the fine women in town, and five miles about.

Val. His reports of them will little invalidate his testimony with me.

Vin. He spares not the innocents in bibs and aprons. I'll secure you, he has made (at best) some gross mistake concerning Christina, which to-morrow will discover; in the mean time let us go to sleep.

Val. I will not hinder you, because I cannot enjoy it myself:—

Hunger, Revenge, to sleep are petty foes,
But only Death the jealous eyes can close.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* CROSSBITE'S *House.*

Enter MRS. JOYNER *and* MRS. CROSSBITE.

Joyn. Good morrow, gossip.

Cros. Good morrow;—but why up so early, good gossip?

Joyn. My care and passionate concern for you and yours would not let me rest, in truly.

Cros. For me and mine?

Joyn. You know we have known one another long; I think it be some nine-and-thirty years since you were married.

Cros. Nine-and-thirty years old, mistress! I'd have you to know, I am no far-born child; and if the register had not been burned in the last great fire, alas!—but my face needs no register sure: nine-and-thirty years old, said you?

Joyn. I said you had been so long married; but, indeed, you bear your years as well as any she in Pepper-alley.

Cros. Nine-and-thirty, mistress!

Joyn. This it is; a woman, now-a-days, had rather you should find her faulty with a man, I warrant you, than discover her age, I warrant you.

Cros. Marry, and 'tis the greatest secret far. Tell a miser he is rich, and a woman she is old,—you will get no money of him, nor kindness of her. To tell me I was nine-and-thirty—(I say no more) 'twas unneighbourly done of you, mistress.

Joyn. My memory confesses my age, it seems, as much as my face; for I thought—

Cros. Pray talk nor think no more of any one's age; but say what brought you hither so early.

Joyn. How does my sweet god-daughter, poor wretch?

Cros. Well, very well.

Joyn. Ah, sweet creature! Alas! alas!—I am sorry for her.

Cros. Why, what has she done to deserve your sorrow, or my reprehension?

Enter LUCY, *and stands unseen at the door.*

Lucy. What, are they talking of me? [*Aside.*

Joyn. In short, she was seen going into the meetinghouse of the wicked, otherwise called a playhouse, hand in hand with that vile fellow Dapperwit.

Cros. Mr. Dapperwit! let me tell you, if 'twere not for master Dapperwit, we might have lived all this vacation upon green cheese, tripe, and ox cheek. If he had it, we should not want it; but, poor gentleman! it often goes hard with him,—for he's a wit.

Joyn. So, then, you are the dog to be fed, while the house is broken up! I say, beware! The sweet bits you swallow will make your daughter's belly swell, mistress; and, after all your junkets, there will be a bone for you to pick, mistress.

Cros. Sure, master Dapperwit is no such manner of man!

Joyn. He is a wit, you say; and what are wits, but contemners of matrons, seducers, or defamers of married women, and deflowerers of helpless virgins, even in the streets, upon the very bulks; affronters of midnight magistracy, and breakers of windows? in a word—

Cros. But he is a little wit, a modest wit, and they do no such outrageous things as your great wits do.

Joyn. Nay, I dare say, he will not say himself he is a little wit if you ask him.

Lucy. Nay, I cannot hear this with patience.—[*Comes forward.*] With your pardon, mother, you are as much mistaken as my godmother in Mr. Dapperwit; for he is as great a wit as any, and in what he speaks or writes as happy as any. I can assure you, he contemns all your tearing wits, in comparison of himself.

Joyn. Alas, poor young wretch! I cannot blame thee so much as thy mother, for thou art not thyself. His bewitching madrigals have charmed thee into some heathenish imp with a hard name.

Lucy. Nymph, you mean, godmother.

Joyn. But you, gossip, know what's what. Yesterday, as I told you, a fine old alderman of the city, seeing your daughter in so ill hands as Dapperwit's, was zealously, and in pure charity, bent upon her redemption; and has sent me to tell you, he will take her into his care and relieve your necessities, if you think good.

Cros. Will he relieve all our necessities?

Joyn. All.

Cros. Mine, as well as my daughter's?

Joyn. Yes.

Cros. Well fare his heart!—D'ye hear, daughter, Mrs. Joyner has satisfied me clearly; Dapperwit is a vile fellow, and, in short, you must put an end to that scandalous familiarity between you.

Lucy. Leave sweet Mr. Dapperwit!—oh furious ingratitude! Was he not the man that gave me my first Farrendon gown, put me out of worsted stockings and plain handkerchiefs, taught me to dress, talk, and move well?

Cros. He has taught you to talk indeed; but, huswife, I will not have my pleasure disputed.

Joyn. Nay, indeed, you are too tart with her, poor sweet soul.

Lucy. He taught me to rehearse, too,—would have brought me into the playhouse, where I might have had as good luck as others: I might have had good clothes, plate, jewels, and things so well about me, that my neighbours, the little gentlemen's wives of fifteen hundred or two thousand pounds a-year, should have retired into the country, sick with envy of my prosperity and greatness.

Joyn. If you follow your mother's counsel, you are like to enjoy all you talk of sooner than by Dapperwit's assistance:—a poor wretch that goes on tick for the paper he writes his lampoons on, and the very ale and coffee that inspire him, as they say.

Cros. I am credibly informed so, indeed, madam Joyner.

Joyn. Well, I have discharged my conscience; good morrow to you both. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—CROSSBITE'S *Dining Room.*

Enter DAPPERWIT *and* RANGER.

Dap. This is the cabinet in which I hide my jewel; a small house, in an obscure, little, retired street, too.

Ran. Vulgarly, an alley.

Dap. Nay, I hide my mistress with as much care as a spark of the town does his money from his dun after a good hand of play; and nothing but you could have wrought upon me for a sight of her, let me perish!

Ran. My obligation to you is great; do not lessen it by delays of the favour you promised.

Dap. But do not censure my honour; for if you had not been in a desperate condition,—for as one nail must beat out another, one poison expel another, one fire draw out another, one fit of drinking cure the sickness of another,—so, the surfeit you took last night of Christina's eyes shall be cured by Lucy's this morning; or as—

Ran. Nay, I bar more similitudes.

Dap. What, in my mistress's lodging? that were as hard as to bar a young parson in the pulpit, the fifth of November, railing at the church of Rome; or as hard as to put you to bed to Lucy and defend you from touching her; or as—

Ran. Or as hard as to make you hold your tongue.—I shall not see your mistress, I see.

Dap. Miss Lucy! Miss Lucy!—[*Knocks at the door and returns.*]—The devil take me, if good men (I say no more) have not been upon their knees to me, to see her, and you at last must obtain it.

Ran. I do not believe you.

Dap. 'Tis such as she; she is beautiful without affectation; amorous without impertinency; airy and brisk without impudence; frolic without rudeness; and, in a word, the justest creature breathing to her assignation.

Ran. You praise her as if you had a mind to part with her; and yet you resolve, I see, to keep her to yourself.

Dap. Keep her! poor creature, she cannot leave me; and rather than leave her, I would leave writing lampoons or sonnets almost.

Ran. Well, I'll leave you with her then.

Dap. What, will you go without seeing her?

Ran. Rather than stay without seeing her.

Dap. Yes, yes, you shall see her; but let me perish if I have not been offered a hundred guineas for a sight of her; by—I say no more.

Ran. [*Aside.*] I understand you now.—[*Aloud.*] If the favour be to be purchased, then I'll bid all I have about me for't.

Dap. Fy, fy, Mr. Ranger! you are pleasant, i'faith. Do you think I would sell the sight of my rarity?—like those gentlemen who hang out flags at Charing-cross, or like—

Ran. Nay, then I'm gone again.

Dap. What, you take it ill I refuse your money? rather than that should be, give us it; but take notice I will borrow it. Now I think on't, Lucy wants a gown and some knacks.

Ran. Here.

Dap. But I must pay it you again: I will not take it unless you engage your honour I shall pay it you again.

Ran. You must pardon me; I will not engage my honour for such a trifle. Go, fetch her out.

Dap. Well, she's a ravishing creature: such eyes and lips, Mr. Ranger!

Ran. Prithee go.

Dap. Such neck and breasts, Mr. Ranger!

Ran. Again, prithee go.

Dap. Such feet, legs, and thighs, Mr. Ranger!

Ran. Prithee let me see 'em.

Dap. And a mouth no bigger than a ring!—I need say no more.

Ran. Would thou wert never to speak again!

Dap. And then so neat, so sweet a creature in

bed, that, to my knowledge, she does not change her sheets in half a year.

Ran. I thank you for that allay to my impatience.

Dap. Miss Lucy! Miss Lucy! Miss!— [*Knocking at the door.*

Ran. Will she not open? I am afraid my pretty miss is not stirring, and therefore will not admit us. Is she not gone her walk to Lamb's Conduit?

Dap. Fy, fy, a quibble next your stomach in a morning! What if she should hear us? would you lose a mistress for a quibble? that's more than I could do, let me perish!—She's within, I hear her.

Ran. But she will not hear you; she's as deaf as if you were a dun or a constable.

Dap. Pish! give her but leave to gape, rub her eyes, and put on her day pinner; the long patch under the left eye; awaken the roses on her cheeks with some Spanish wool, and warrant her breath with some lemon-peel; the doors fly off the hinges, and she into my arms. She knows there is as much artifice to keep a victory as to gain it; and 'tis a sign she values the conquest of my heart.

Ran. I thought her beauty had not stood in need of art.

Dap. Beauty's a coward still without the help of art, and may have the fortune of a conquest but cannot keep it. Beauty and art can no more be asunder than love and honour.

Ran. Or, to speak more like yourself, wit and judgment.

Dap. Don't you hear the door wag yet?

Ran. Not a whit.

Dap. Miss! miss! 'tis your slave that calls. Come, all this tricking for him!—Lend me your comb, Mr. Ranger.

Ran. No, I am to be preferred to-day, you are to set me off. You are in possession, I will not lend you arms to keep me out.

Dap. A pox! don't let me be ungrateful; if she has smugged herself up for me, let me prune and flounce my peruke a little for her. There's ne'er a young fellow in the town but will do as much for a mere stranger in the playhouse.

Ran. A wit's wig has the privilege of being uncombed in the very playhouse, or in the presence.

Dap. But not in the presence of his mistress; 'tis a greater neglect of her than himself. Pray lend me your comb.

Ran. I would not have men of wit and courage make use of every fop's mean arts to keep or gain a mistress.

Dap. But don't you see every day, though a man have never so much wit and courage, his mistress will revolt to those fops that wear and comb perukes well. I'll break off the bargain, and will not receive you my partner.

Ran. Therefore you see I am setting up for myself. [*Combs his peruke.*

Dap. She comes, she comes!—pray, your comb. [*Snatches* RANGER'S *comb.*

Enter MRS. CROSSBITE.

Cros. Bargain!—what, are you offering us to sale?

Dap. A pox! is't she?—Here take your comb again then. [*Returns the comb.*

Cros. Would you sell us? 'tis like you, y'fads.

Dap. Sell thee!—where should we find a chapman? Go, prithee, mother, call out my dear Miss Lucy.

Cros. Your Miss Lucy! I do not wonder you have the conscience to bargain for us behind our backs, since you have the impudence to claim a propriety in us to my face.

Ran. How's this, Dapperwit?

Dap. Come, come, this gentleman will not think the worse of a woman for my acquaintance with her. He has seen me bring your daughter to the lure with a chiney-orange, from one side of the playhouse to the other.

Cros. I would have the gentleman and you to know my daughter is a girl of reputation, though she has been seen in your company; but is now so sensible of her past danger, that she is resolved never more to venture her pitcher to the well, as they say.

Dap. How's that, widow? I wonder at your confidence.

Cros. I wonder at your old impudence, that where you have had so frequent repulses you should provoke another, and bring your friend here to witness your disgrace.

Dap. Hark you, widow, a little.

Cros. What, have you mortgaged my daughter to that gentleman; and now would offer me a snip to join in the security!

Dap. [*Aside.*] She overheard me talk of a bargain;—'twas unlucky.—[*Aloud.*] Your wrath is grounded upon a mistake: Miss Lucy herself shall be judge; call her out, pray.

Cros. She shall not; she will not come to you.

Dap. Till I hear it from her own mouth, I cannot believe it.

Cros. You shall hear her say 't through the door.

Dap. I shall doubt it unless she say it to my face.

Cros. Shall we be troubled with you no more then?

Dap. If she command my death, I cannot disobey her.

Cros. Come out, child.

Enter LUCY, *holding down her head.*

Dap. Your servant, dearest miss: can you have—

Cros. Let me ask her.

Dap. No, I'll ask her.

Ran. I'll throw up cross or pile who shall ask her.

Dap. Can you have the heart to say you will never more break a cheese-cake with me at New Spring-garden, the Neat-house, or Chelsea? never more sit in my lap at a new play? never more wear a suit of knots of my choice? and, last of all, never more pass away an afternoon with me again in the Green Garret?—do not forget the Green Garret.

Lucy. I wish I had never seen the Green Garret.—Damn the Green Garret!

Dap. Damn the Green Garret!—You are strangely altered!

Lucy. 'Tis you are altered.

Dap. You have refused Colby's Mulberry-garden, the French-houses, for the Green Garret; and a little something in the Green Garret pleased you more than the best treat the other places could

yield; and can you of a sudden quit the Green Garret?

Lucy. Since you have a design to pawn me for the rent, 'tis time to remove my goods.

Dap. Thou art extremely mistaken.

Lucy. Besides, I have heard such strange things of you this morning.

Dap. What things?

Lucy. I blush to speak 'em.

Dap. I know my innocence, therefore take my charge as a favour. What have I done?

Lucy. Then know, vile wit, my mother has confessed just now thou wert false to me, to her too certain knowledge; and hast forced even her to be false to me too.

Dap. Faults in drink, Lucy, when we are not ourselves, should not condemn us.

Lucy. And now to let me out to hire like a hackney!—I tell you my own dear mother shall bargain for me no more; there are as little as I can bargain for themselves now-a-days, as well as properer women.

Cros. Whispering all this while!—Beware of his snares again: come away, child.

Dap. Sweet, dear miss—

Lucy. Bargain for me!—you have reckoned without your hostess, as they say. Bargain for me! bargain for me! [*Exit.*

Dap. I must return, then, to treat with you.

Cros. Treat me no treatings, but take a word for all. You shall no more dishonour my daughter, nor molest my lodgings, as you have done at all hours.

Dap. Do you intend to change 'em, then, to Bridewell, or Long's powdering-tub?

Cros. No, to a bailiff's house, and then you'll be so civil, I presume, as not to trouble us.

Ran. Here, will you have my comb again, Dapperwit?

Dap. A pox! I think women take inconstancy from me worse than from any man breathing.

Cros. Pray, sir, forget me before you write your next lampoon. [*Exit.*

Enter SIR SIMON ADDLEPLOT *in the dress of a Clerk.*—RANGER *retires to the background.*

Sir Sim. Have I found you? have I found you in your by-walks, faith and troth? I am almost out of breath in following you. Gentlemen when they get into an alley walk so fast, as if they had more earnest business there than in the broad streets.

Dap. [*Aside.*]—How came this sot hither? Fortune has sent him to ease my choler.—You impudent rascal, who are you, that dare intrude thus on us? [*Strikes him.*

Sir Sim. Don't you know me, Dapperwit? sure you know me. [*Softly.*

Dap. Wilt thou dishonour me with thy acquaintance too? thou rascally insolent, pen-and-ink man. [*Strikes him again.*

Sir Sim. Oh! oh! sure you know me! pray know me. [*Softly.*

Dap. By thy saucy familiarity, thou shouldst be a marker at a tennis-court, a barber, or a slave that fills coffee.

Sir Sim. Oh! oh!

Dap. What art thou! [*Kicks him.*

Sir Sim. Nay, I must not discover myself to Ranger for a kick or two. Oh, pray hold, sir: by that you will know me. [*Delivers him a letter.*

Dap. How, sir Simon!

Sir Sim. Mum, mum, make no excuses, man; I would not Ranger should have known me for five hundred—kicks.

Dap. Your disguise is so natural, I protest, it will excuse me.

Sir Sim. I know that, prithee make no excuses, I say. No ceremony between thee and I, man:—read the letter.

Dap. What, you have not opened it!

Sir Sim. Prithee, don't be angry, the seal is a little cracked: for I could not help kissing Mrs. Martha's letter. The word is, now or never. Her father she finds will be abroad all this day, and she longs to see your friend sir Simon Addleplot:—faith 'tis a pretty jest; while I am with her, and praising myself to her at no ordinary rate. Let thee and I alone at an intrigue.

Dap. Tell her I will not fail to meet her at the place and time. Have a care of your charge; and manage your business like yourself, for yourself.

Sir Sim. I warrant you.

Dap. The gaining Gripe's daughter will make me support the loss of this young jilt here. [*Aside.*

Ran. [*Coming forward.*] What fellow's that?

Dap. A servant to a friend of mine.

Ran. Methinks he something resembles our acquaintance sir Simon; but it is no compliment to tell him so: for that knight is the most egregious coxcomb that ever played with lady's fan.

Sir Sim. So! thanks to my disguise, I know my enemies. [*Aside.*

Ran. The most incorrigible ass, beyond the reproof of a kicking rival or a frowning mistress. But, if it be possible, thou dost use him worse than his mistress or rival can; thou dost make such a cully of him.

Sir Sim. Does he think so too? [*Aside.*

Dap. Go, friend, go about your business.—[*Exit* SIR SIMON.] A pox! you would spoil all, just in the critical time of projection. He brings me here a summons from his mistress, to meet her in the evening; will you come to my wedding?

Ran. Don't speak so loud, you'll break poor Lucy's heart. Poor creature, she cannot leave you; and, rather than leave her, you would leave writing of lampoons or sonnets—almost.

Dap. Come, let her go, ungrateful baggage!—But now you talk of sonnets, I am no living wit if her love has not cost me two thousand couplets at least.

Ran. But what would you give, now, for a new satire against women, ready made?—'Twould be as convenient to buy satires against women ready made, as it is to buy cravats ready tied.

Dap. Or as—

Ran. Hey, come away, come away, Mr., or as— [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* CROSSBITE'S *House.*

Enter MRS. JOYNER *and* GRIPE.

Gripe. Peace, plenty, and pastime be within these walls!

Joyn. 'Tis a small house, you see, and mean furniture; for no gallants are suffered to come hither. She might have had ere now as good

lodgings as any in town; her Mortlake hangings, great glasses, cabinets, china, embroidered beds, Persia carpets, gold-plate, and the like, if she would have put herself forward. But your worship may please to make 'em remove to a place fit to receive one of your worship's quality; for this is a little scandalous, in truly.

Gripe. No, no; I like it well enough:—I am not dainty. Besides, privacy, privacy, Mrs. Joyner! I love privacy in opposition to the wicked, who hate it. [*Looks about.*

Joyn. What do you look for, sir?

Gripe. Walls have ears; but, besides, I look for a private place to retire to, in time of need. Oh! here's one convenient.

[*Turns up a hanging, and discovers the slender provisions of the family.*]

Joyn. But you see, poor innocent souls, to what use they put it;—not to hide gallants.

Gripe. Temperance is the nurse of chastity.

Joyn. But your worship may please to mend their fare; and, when you come, may make them entertain you better than, you see, they do themselves.

Gripe. No, I am not dainty, as I told you. I abominate entertainments;—no entertainments, pray, Mrs. Joyner.

Joyn. No! [*Aside.*

Gripe. There can be no entertainment to me more luscious and savoury than communion with that little gentlewoman.—Will you call her out? I fast till I see her.

Joyn. But, in truly, your worship, we should have brought a bottle or two of Rhenish and some Naples biscuit, to have entertained the young gentlewoman. 'Tis the mode for lovers to treat their mistresses.

Gripe. Modes! I tell you, Mrs. Joyner, I hate modes and forms.

Joyn. You must send for something to entertain her with.

Gripe. Again entertaining!—we will be to each other a feast.

Joyn. I shall be ashamed, in truly, your worship.—Besides, the young gentlewoman will despise you.

Gripe. I shall content her, I warrant you; leave it to me.

Joyn. [*Aside.*] I am sure you will not content me, if you will not content her; 'tis as impossible for a man to love and be a miser, as to love and be wise, as they say.

Gripe. While you talk of treats, you starve my eyes; I long to see the fair one; fetch her hither.

Joyn. I am ashamed she should find me so abominable a liar; I have so praised you to her, and, above all your virtues, your liberality; which is so great a virtue, that it often excuses youth, beauty, courage, wit, or anything.

Gripe. Pish, pish! 'tis the virtue of fools; every fool can have it.

Joyn. And will your worship want it then? I told her —

Gripe. Why would you tell her anything of me? you know I am a modest man. But come, if you will have me as extravagant as the wicked, take that and fetch us a treat, as you call it.

Joyn. Upon my life a groat! what will this purchase?

Gripe. Two black pots of ale and a cake, at the cellar.—Come, the wine has arsenic in't.

Joyn. [*Aside.*] Well, I am mistaken, and my hopes are abused: I never knew any man so mortified a miser, that he would deny his lechery anything; I must be even with thee then another way. [*Exit.*

Gripe. These useful old women are more exorbitant and craving in their desires than the young ones in theirs. These prodigals in white perukes spoil 'em both; and that's the reason, when the squires come under my clutches, I make 'em pay for their folly and mine, and 'tis but conscience:—oh, here comes the fair one at last!

Re-enter JOYNER *leading in* LUCY, *who hangs backward as she enters.*

Lucy. Oh Lord, there's a man, godmother!

Joyn. Come in, child, thou art so bashful —

Lucy. My mother is from home too, I dare not.

Joyn. If she were here, she'd teach you better manners.

Lucy. I'm afraid she'd be angry.

Joyn. To see you so much an ass.—Come along, I say.

Gripe. Nay, speak to her gently; if you won't, I will.

Lucy. Thank you, sir.

Gripe. Pretty innocent! there is, I see, one left of her age; what hap have I! Sweet, little gentlewoman, come sit down by me.

Lucy. I am better bred, I hope, sir.

Gripe. You must sit down by me.

Lucy. I'd rather stand, if you please.

Gripe. To please me, you must sit, sweetest.

Lucy. Not before my godmother, sure.

Gripe. Wonderment of innocence!

Joyn. A poor bashful girl, sir: I'm sorry she is not better taught.

Gripe. I am glad she is not taught; I'll teach her myself.

Lucy. Are you a dancing-master then, sir? But if I should be dull, and not move as you would have me, you would not beat me, sir, I hope?

Gripe. Beat thee, honeysuckle! I'll use thee thus, and thus, and thus. [*Kisses her.*] Ah, Mrs. Joyner, prithee go fetch our treat now.

Joyn. A treat of a groat! I will not wag.

Gripe. Why don't you go? Here, take more money, and fetch what you will; take here, half-a-crown.

Joyn. What will half-a-crown do?

Gripe. Take a crown then, an angel, a piece;—begone!

Joyn. A treat only will not serve my turn; I must buy the poor wretch there some toys.

Gripe. What toys? what? speak quickly.

Joyn. Pendants, necklaces, fans, ribbons, points, laces, stockings, gloves ——

Gripe. Hold, hold! before it comes to a gown.

Joyn. Well remembered, sir; indeed she wants a gown, for she has but that one to her back. For your own sake you should give her a new gown, for variety of dresses rouses desire, and makes an old mistress seem every day a new one.

Gripe. For that reason she shall have no new gown; for I am naturally constant, and as I am still the same, I love she should be still the same. But here, take half a piece for the other things.

Joyn. Half a piece!—

Gripe. Prithee, begone!—take t'other piece then—two pieces—three pieces—five! here, 'tis all I have.

Joyn. I must have the broad-seal ring too, or I stir not.

Gripe. Insatiable woman! will you have that too! Prithee spare me that, 'twas my grandfather's.

Joyn. That's false, he had ne'er a coat.—So! now I go; this is but a violent fit, and will not hold. [*Aside.*

Lucy. Oh! whither do you go, godmother? will you leave me alone?

Joyn. The gentleman will not hurt you; you may venture yourself with him alone.

Lucy. I think I may, godmother.—[*Exit* JOYNER.] What! will you lock me in, sir? don't lock me in, sir.

[GRIPE, *fumbling at the door, locks it.*

Gripe. 'Tis a private lesson, I must teach you, fair.

Lucy. I don't see your fiddle, sir; where is your little kit?

Gripe. I'll show it thee presently, sweetest.—[*Sets a chair against the door*].—Necessity, mother of invention!—Come, my dearest.

[*Takes her in his arms.*

Lucy. What do you mean, sir? don't hurt me, sir, will you—Oh! oh! you will kill me! Murder! murder!—Oh! oh!—help! help! oh!

The door is broken open; enter MRS. CROSSBITE, *and her* Landlord, *and his* 'Prentice, *in aprons.*

Cros. What, murder my daughter, villain!

Lucy. I wish he had murdered me.—Oh! oh!

Cros. What has he done?

Lucy. Why would you go out, and leave me alone? unfortunate woman that I am!

Gripe. How now, what will this end in? [*Aside.*

Cros. Who brought him in?

Lucy. That witch, that treacherous false woman, my godmother, who has betrayed me, sold me to his lust.—Oh! oh!—

Cros. Have you ravished my daughter then, you old goat? ravished my daughter!—ravished my daughter! speak, villain.

Gripe. By yea and by nay, no such matter.

Cros. A canting rogue, too! Take notice, landlord, he has ravished my daughter, you see her all in tears and distraction; and see there the wicked engine of the filthy execution.—[*Pointing to the chair.*]—Jeremy, call up the neighbours, and the constable.—False villain! thou shalt die for it.

Gripe. Hold! hold!—[*Aside.*] Nay, I am caught.

Cros. Go, go, make haste—

Lucy. Oh! oh!—

Cros. Poor wretch!—Go quickly.

Gripe. Hold! hold!—Thou young spawn of the old serpent! wicked, as I thought thee innocent! wilt thou say I would have ravished thee!

Lucy. I will swear you did ravish me.

Gripe. I thought so, treacherous Eve!—then I am gone, I must shift as well as I can.

Lucy. Oh! oh!—

Cros. Will none of you call up the neighbours, and the authority of the alley?

Gripe. Hold, I'll give you twenty mark among you to let me go.

Cros. Villain! nothing shall buy thy life.

Land. But stay, Mrs. Crossbite, let me talk with you.

Lucy. Oh! oh!—

Land. Come, sir, I am your friend:—in a word, I have appeased her, and she shall be contented with a little sum.

Gripe. What is it? what is it?

Land. But five hundred pounds.

Gripe. But five hundred pounds!—hang me then, hang me rather.

Land. You will say I have been your friend.

Pren. The constable and neighbours are a-coming.

Gripe. How, how; will you not take a hundred? pray use conscience in your ways.

[*Kneels to* MRS. CROSSBITE.

Cros. I scorn your money! I will not take a thousand.

Gripe. [*Aside.*] My enemies are many, and I shall be a scandal to the faithful, as a laughing-stock to the wicked.—[*Aloud.*] Go, prepare your engines for my persecution; I'll give you the best security I can.

Land. The instruments are drawing in the other room, if you please to go thither.

Cros. Indeed, now I consider, a portion will do my daughter more good than his death. That would but publish her shame; money will cover it—*probatum est*, as they say. Let me tell you, sir, 'tis a charitable thing to give a young maid a portion. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—LYDIA'S *Lodging.*

Enter LYDIA *and my* LADY FLIPPANT, *attended by* LEONORE.

Lyd. 'Tis as hard for a woman to conceal her indignation from her apostate lover, as to conceal her love from her faithful servant.

Flip. Or almost as hard as it is for the prating fellows now-a-days to conceal the favours of obliging ladies.

Lyd. If Ranger should come up, (I saw him just now in the street,) the discovery of my anger to him now would be as mean as the discovery of my love to him before.

Flip. Though I did so mean a thing as to love a fellow, I would not do so mean a thing as to confess it, certainly, by my trouble to part with him. If I confessed love, it should be before they left me.

Lyd. So you would deserve to be left, before you were. But could you ever do so mean a thing as to confess love to any?

Flip. Yes; but I never did so mean a thing as really to love any.

Lyd. You had once a husband.

Flip. Fy! madam, do you think me so ill-bred as to love a husband?

Lyd. You had a widow's heart, before you were a widow, I see.

Flip. I should rather make an adventure of my honour with a gallant for a gown, a new coach, a necklace, than clap my husband's cheeks for them, or sit in his lap. I should be as ashamed to be caught in such a posture with a husband, as a brisk well-bred spark of the town would be to be caught on his knees at prayers—unless to his mistress.

Enter RANGER *and* DAPPERWIT.

Lyd. Mr. Ranger 'twas obligingly done of you.

Ran. Indeed, cousin, I had kept my promise with you last night, but this gentleman knows—

Lyd. You mistake me; but you shall not lessen any favour you do to me. You are going to excuse your not coming to me last night, when I take it as a particular obligation, that though you threatened me with a visit, upon consideration you were so civil as not to trouble me.

Dap. This is an unlucky morning with me! here's my eternal persecution, the widow Flippant. [*Aside.*

Flip. What, Mr. Dapperwit!

[DAPPERWIT *retires to the back of the stage, followed by* FLIPPANT.

Ran. Indeed, cousin, besides my business, another cause I did not wait on you was, my apprehension you were gone to the Park, notwithstanding your promise to the contrary.

Lyd. Therefore, you went to the Park to visit me there, notwithstanding your promise to the contrary?

Ran. Who, I at the Park! when I had promised to wait upon you at your lodging! But were you at the Park, madam?

Lyd. Who, I at the Park! when I had promised to wait for you at home! I was no more at the Park than you were. Were you at the Park?

Ran. The Park had been a dismal desert to me, notwithstanding all the good company in it, if I had wanted yours.

Lyd. [*Aside.*] Because it has been the constant endeavour of men, to keep women ignorant, they think us so; but 'tis that increases our inquisitiveness, and makes us know them ignorant, as false. He is as impudent a dissembler as the widow Flippant, who is making her importunate addresses in vain, for aught I see.

[FLIPPANT *comes forward, driving* DAPPERWIT *from one side of the stage to the other.*

Flip. Dear Mr. Dapperwit! merciful Mr. Dapperwit!

Dap. Unmerciful lady Flippant!

Flip. Will you be satisfied?

Dap. Won't you be satisfied?

Flip. That a wit should be jealous! that a wit should be jealous! there's never a brisk young fellow in the town, though no wit, Heaven knows, but thinks too well of himself, to think ill of his wife or mistress. Now, that a wit should lessen his opinion of himself;—for shame!

Dap. I promised to bring you off, but I find it enough to shift for myself— [*Softly, apart to* RANGER.

Lyd. What! out of breath, madam!

Flip. I have been defending our cause, madam; I have beat him out of the pit. I do so mumble these prating, censorious fellows they call wits, when I meet with them.

Dap. Her ladyship, indeed, is the only thing in petticoats I dread. 'Twas well for me there was company in the room; for I dare no more venture myself with her alone, than a cully that has been bit dares venture himself in a tavern with an old rook.

Flip. I am the revenger of our sex, certainly.

Dap. And the most insatiable one I ever knew, madam; I dare not stand your fury longer.—Mr. Ranger, I will go before and make a new appointment with your friends that expect you at dinner at the French-house: 'tis fit business still wait on love.

Ran. Do so—but now I think on't, sir Thomas goes out of town this afternoon, and I shall not see him here again these three months.

Lyd. Nay, pray take him with you, sir.

Flip. No, sir, you shall not take the gentleman from his mistress.—[*Aside to* DAPPERWIT.] Do not go yet, sweet Mr. Dapperwit.

Lyd. Take him with you, sir; I suppose his business may be there to borrow, or win money, and I ought not to be his hindrance: for when he has none, he has his desperate designs upon that little I have;—for want of money makes as devout lovers as Christians.

Dap. I hope, madam, he offers you no less security than his liberty.

Lyd. His liberty is as poor a pawn to take up money on as honour. He is like the desperate bankrupts of this age, who, if they can get people's fortunes into their hands, care not though they spend them in jail all their lives.

Flip. And the poor crediting ladies, when they have parted with their money, must be contented with a pitiful composition, or starve, for all them.

Ran. But widows are commonly so wise as to be sure their men are solvable before they trust 'em.

Flip. Can you blame 'em! I declare, I will trust no man. Pray, do not take it ill, gentlemen: quacks in their bills, and poets in the titles of their plays, do not more disappoint us, than gallants with their promises; but I trust none.

Dap. Nay, she's a very Jew in that particular. To my knowledge, she 'll know her man, over and over again, before she trust him.

Ran. Well, my dearest cousin, good-morrow. When I stay from you, so long again, blame me to purpose, and be extremely angry; for nothing can make me amends for the loss of your company, but your reprehension of my absence. I 'll take such a chiding as kindly as Russian wives do beating.

Lyd. If you were my husband, I could not take your absence more kindly than I do.

Ran. And if you were my wife, I would trust you as much out of my sight as I could, to show my opinion of your virtue.

Flip. A well-bred gentleman, I warrant.—Will you go then, cruel Mr. Dapperwit?

[*Exeunt* RANGER *and* DAPPERWIT, *followed by my* Lady FLIPPANT.

Lyd. Have I not dissembled well, Leonore?

Leo. But, madam, to what purpose? why do you not put him to his trial, and see what he can say for himself?

Lyd. I am afraid lest my proofs, and his guilt, should make him desperate, and so contemn that pardon which he could not hope for.

Leo. 'Tis unjust to condemn him before you hear him.

Lyd. I will reprieve him till I have more evidence.

Leo. How will you get it?

Lyd. I will write him a letter in Christina's name, desiring to meet him; when I shall soon discover if his love to her be of a longer standing than since last night; and if it be not, I will not longer trust him with the vanity to think she gave him the occasion to follow her home from the Park; so will at once disabuse him and myself.

Leo. What care the jealous take in making sure of ills which they, but in imagination, cannot undergo!

Lyd. Misfortunes are least dreadful when most near:
'Tis less to undergo the ill, than fear.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* GRIPE'S *House.*

Enter MRS. JOYNER *and* GRIPE, *the latter in a blue gown and nightcap.*

Joyn. What, not well, your worship! This it is, you will be laying out yourself beyond your strength. You have taken a surfeit of the little gentlewoman, I find. Indeed you should not have been so immoderate in your embraces; your worship is something in years, in truly.

Gripe. Graceless, perfidious woman! what makest thou here? art thou not afraid to be used like an informer, since thou hast made me pay thee for betraying me?

Joyn. Betray your worship! what do you mean? I an informer! I scorn your words!

Gripe. Woman, I say again, thou art as treacherous as an informer, and more unreasonable; for he lets us have something for our money before he disturb us.

Joyn. Your money, I'm sure, was laid out faithfully; and I went away because I would not disturb you.

Gripe. I had not grudged you the money I gave you:—but the five hundred pounds! the five hundred pounds! Inconscionable, false woman, the five hundred pounds!—You cheated, trepanned, robbed me, of the five hundred pounds!

Joyn. I cheat you! I rob you!—well, remember what you say, you shall answer it before Mr. Doublecap and the best of—

Gripe. Oh, impudent woman, speak softly!

Joyn. I will not speak softly; for innocence is loud as well as barefaced. Is this your return, after you have made me a mere drudge to your filthy lusts!

Gripe. Speak softly; my sister, daughter, and servants, will hear.

Joyn. I would have witnesses, to take notice that you blast my good name, which was as white as a tulip, and as sweet as the head of your cane, before you wrought me to the carrying on the work of your fleshly carnal seekings.

Gripe. Softly! softly! they are coming in.

Enter FLIPPANT *and* MARTHA.

Flip. What's the matter, brother?

Gripe. Nothing, nothing, sister, only the godly woman is fallen into a fit of zeal against the enormous transgressions of the age. Go! go! you do not love to hear vanity reproved; pray begone!

Joyn. Pray stay, madam, that you may know—

Gripe. [*Aside to* JOYNER.] Hold! hold! here are five guineas for thee,—pray say nothing.—[*Aloud.*] Sister, pray begone, I say.—[*Exeunt* FLIPPANT *and* MARTHA.] Would you prejudice your own reputation to injure mine?

Joyn. Would you prejudice your own soul to wrong my repute, in truly? [*Pretends to weep.*

Gripe. Pray have me in excuse. Indeed, I thought you had a share of the five hundred pounds, because you took away my seal-ring; which they made me send, together with a note to my cash-keeper for five hundred pounds. Besides, I thought none but you knew it was my wonted token to send for money by.

Joyn. 'Tis unlucky I should forget it, and leave it on the table!—But oh the harlotry! did she make that use of it then? 'twas no wonder you did not stay till I came back.

Gripe. I stayed till the money released me.

Joyn. Have they the money, then? five hundred pounds!

Gripe. Too certain.

Joyn. They told me not a word of it; and have you no way to retrieve it?

Gripe. Not any.

Joyn. [*Aside.*] I am glad of it.—[*Aloud.*] Is there no law but against saints?

Gripe. I will not for five hundred pounds publish my transgression myself, lest I should be thought to glory in't: though, I must confess, 'twould tempt a man to conform to public praying and sinning, since 'tis so chargeable to pray and sin in private.

Joyn. But are you resolved to give off a loser?

Gripe. How shall I help it?

Joyn. Nay, I'll see you shall have what the young jade has, for your money: I'll make 'em use some conscience, however.—Take a man's money for nothing!

Gripe. Thou sayest honestly, indeed. And shall I have my pennyworths out of the little gentlewoman for all this?

Joyn. I'll be engaged body for body for her, and you shall take the forfeiture on me else.

Gripe. No, no, I'll rather take your word, Mrs. Joyner.

Joyn. Go in and dress yourself smug, and leave the rest to me.

Gripe. No man breathing would give-off a loser, as she says. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Another Room in the same.*

SIR SIMON ADDLEPLOT *discovered sitting at a desk writing as a Clerk, my* LADY FLIPPANT *jogging him.*

Sir Sim. 'Tis a lord's mortgage, and therefore requires the more haste:—pray do not jog me, madam.

Flip. Dull rascal! [*Aside.*

Sir Sim. They cannot stay for money as other folks. If you will not let me make an end on't, I shall lose my expedition-fee.

Flip. There are some clerks would have understood me before this. [*Aside.*

Sir Sim. Nay, pray be quiet, madam; if you squeeze me so to the wall, I cannot write.

Flip. [*Aside.*] 'Tis much for the honour of the gentlemen of this age, that we persons of quality are forced to descend to the importuning of a clerk, a butler, coachman, or footman; while the rogues are as dull of apprehension, too, as an unfledged country squire amongst his mother's maids!

[*Jogs him again.*

Sir Sim. Again! Let me tell you, madam, familiarity breeds contempt: you'll never leave till you have made me saucy.

Flip. I would I could see that.

Sir Sim. I vow and swear then, get you gone! or I'll add a black patch or two to those on your

face.—[*Aside.*] I shall have no time to get Mrs. Martha out, for her.

Flip. Will you, sir, will you! [*Jogs him again.*

Sir Sim. [*Aside.*] I must have a plot for her, she is a coy woman.—[*Aloud.*] I vow and swear if you pass this crevice, I'll kiss you in plain English.

Flip. I would I could see that!—do you defy me! [*Steps to him—he kisses her.*

Sir Sim. [*Aside.*] How's this! I vow and swear, she kisses as tamely as Mrs. Ticklish, and with her mouth open too.

Flip. I thought you would have been ashamed to have done so to your master's own sister!

Sir Sim. I hope you'll be quiet now, madam?

Flip. Nay, I'll be revenged of you sure.

Sir Sim. If you come again, I shall do more to you than that.—[*Aside.*] I'll pursue my plot and try if she be honest.

Flip. You do more to me than that! nay, if you'll do more to me than that—

[*She throws down his ink and runs out, he following her.*

Enter JOYNER.

Joyn. I must visit my young clients in the meantime.

Re-enter SIR SIMON *holding up his hands.*

What's the matter, sir Simon?

Sir Sim. Lord! who would have thought it?

Joyn. What ails you, sir Simon?

Sir Sim. I have made such a discovery, Mrs. Joyner!

Joyn. What is't?

Sir Sim. Such a one that makes me at once glad and sorry; I am sorry my lady Flippant is naught, but I'm glad I know it:—thanks still to my disguise.

Joyn. Fy! fy!

Sir Sim. Nay, this hand can tell—

Joyn. But how?

Sir Sim. She threw down my ink-glass, and ran away into the next room; I followed her, and, in revenge, threw her down upon the bed:—but, in short, all that I could do to her would not make her squeak.

Joyn. She was out of breath, man, she was out of breath.

Sir Sim. Ah, Mrs. Joyner, say no more, say no more of that!

Re-enter FLIPPANT.

Flip. You rude, unmannerly rascal!

Joyn. You see she complains now.

Sir Sim. I know why, Mrs. Joyner, I know why. [*Aside to* JOYNER.

Flip. I'll have you turned out of the house; your are not fit for my brother's service.

Sir Sim. Not for yours, you mean, madam. [*Aside.*

Flip. I'll go and acquaint my brother—

Joyn. [*Aside to* FLIPPANT.] Hold, hold, madam, speak not so loud:—'tis sir Simon Addleplot, your lover, who has taken this disguise on purpose to be near you, and to watch and supplant his rival.

Flip. What a beast was I, I could not discover it! you have undone me! why would you not tell me sooner of it? [*Aside to* JOYNER.

Joyn. I thought he had been discernible enough.

Flip. I protest, I knew him not; for I must confess to you, my eyes are none of the best since I have used the last new wash of mercury-water.—What will he think of me!

Joyn. Let me alone with him.—[*To* SIR SIMON.] Come, come, did you think you could disguise yourself from my lady's knowledge? she knew you man, or else you had ne'er had those liberties. Alas, poor lady, she cannot resist you!

Flip. 'Tis my weakness.

Sir Sim. How's this!—but here comes my master.

Enter GRIPE *and* MARTHA.

Gripe. Come, Mrs. Joyner, are you ready to go?

Joyn. I am ever ready when your worship commands.

Flip. Brother, if you go to t'other end of the town, you'll set me down near the playhouse?

Gripe. The playhouse! do you think I will be seen near the playhouse?

Flip. You shall set me down in Lincoln's-inn-fields, then; for I have earnest business there.—[*Apart to* SIR SIMON.] When I come home again, I'll laugh at you soundly, sir Simon.

Sir Sim. Has Joyner betrayed me then! 'tis time to look to my hits. [*Aside.*

Gripe. Martha, be sure you stay within now. If you go out, you shall never come into my doors again.

Mar. No, I will not, sir; I'll ne'er come into your doors again, if once I should go out.

Gripe. 'Tis well said, girl.

[*Exeunt* GRIPE, JOYNER, *and* FLIPPANT.

Sir Sim. 'Twas prettily said: I understand you, they are dull and have no intrigue in 'em. But dear, sweet Mrs. Martha, 'tis time we were gone; you have stole away your scarfs and hood from your maid, I hope?

Mar. Nay, I am ready, but—

Sir Sim. Come, come, sir Simon Addleplot, poor gentleman, is an impatient man, to my knowledge.

Mar. Well, my venture is great, I'm sure, for a man I know not. But pray, Jonas, do not deceive me; is he so fine a gentleman, as you say he is?

Sir Sim. Pish! pish! he is the—gentleman of the town, faith and troth.

Mar. But may I take your word, Jonas?

Sir Sim. 'Tis not my word, 'tis the word of all the town.

Mar. Excuse me, Jonas, for that:—I never heard any speak well of him but Mr. Dapperwit and you.

Sir Sim. That's because he has been a rival to all men, and a gallant to all ladies. Rivals and deserted mistresses never speak well of a man.

Mar. Has he been so general in his amours? his kindness is not to be valued then.

Sir Sim. The more by you; because 'tis for you he deserts all the rest, faith and troth.

Mar. You plead better for him than he could for himself, I believe; for, indeed, they say he is no better than an idiot.

Sir Sim. Then, believe me, madam—for nobody knows him better than I—he has as much wit, courage, and as good a mien to the full, as I have. —He an idiot!

Mar. The common gull; so perspicuous a fop, the women find him out:—for none of 'em will marry him.

Sir Sim. You may see, now, how he and you are abused. For that he is not married, is a sign of his wit; and for being perspicuous, 'tis false; he is as mysterious as a new parliament-man, or a

young statesman newly taken from a coffee-house or tennis-court.

Mar. But is it a sign of his wit because he is not married?

Sir Sim. Yes, yes; your women of the town ravish your fops: there's not one about the town unmarried that has anything.

Mar. It may be then he has spent his estate.

Sir Sim. [*Aside.*] How unluckily guessed!—[*Aloud.*] If he had, he has a head can retrieve it again.

Mar. Besides, they say he has the modish distemper.

Sir Sim. He can cure it with the best French chirurgeon in town.

Mar. Has his practice on himself been so much?

Sir Sim. Come, come.—
Fame, like deserted jilt, does still belie men,
Who doubts her man, must be advised by Hymen;
For he knows best of any how to try men. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The old Pall Mall.*

Enter RANGER *and* DAPPERWIT.

Ran. Now the Lucys have renounced us, hey for the Christinas! She cannot use me worse than your honourable mistress did you.

Dap. A pox! some young heir or another has promised her marriage. There are so many fools in the world, 'tis impossible for a man of wit to keep his wench from being a lady, let me perish!

Ran. But have you no other acquaintance that sticks to her vocation, in spite of temptations of honour or filthy lucre? I declare, I make honourable love merely out of necessity, as your rooks play on the square rather than not play at all.

Enter LEONORE *masked, with a Letter in her hand.*

Dap. Come, the devil will not lose a gamester: here's ready money for you, push freely.

Ran. Thou art as well met as if by assignation. [*To* LEONORE.

Leo. And you are as well met as if you were the man I looked for.

Ran. Kind rogue!

Leo. Sweet sir!

Ran. Come, I am thy prisoner, (without more words,) show but thy warrant. [*Goes to pull off her Mask.*

Leo. You mistake, sir; here is my pass. [*Gives him the Letter.*

Ran. A letter! and directed to me!
[*Reads.*] *I cannot put up the injuries and affronts you did me last night;*—a challenge, upon my life! and by such a messenger!—*therefore conjure you by your honour, at eight o'clock precisely, this evening, to send your man to St. James's gate, to wait for me with a chair, to conduct me to what place you shall think most fit, for the giving of satisfaction to the injured*—CHRISTINA.
Christina! I am amazed! What is it o'clock, Dapperwit?

Dap. It wants not half an hour of eight.

Ran. [*To* LEONORE.] Go then back, my pretty herald, and tell my fair enemy, the service she designs my man is only fit for my friend here; whose faith and honour she may be secure of. He shall immediately go wait for her at St. James's gate, whilst I go to prepare a place for our rencounter, and myself to die at her feet. [*Exit* LEONORE.] Dapperwit, dear Dapperwit.

Dap. What lucky surprisal's this?

Ran. Prithee ask no questions, till I have more leisure and less astonishment. I know you will not deny to be an instrument in my happiness.

Dap. No, let me perish! I take as much pleasure to bring lovers together as an old woman; or as a bankrupt gamester loves to look on, though he has no advantage by the play; or as a bully that fights not himself, yet takes pleasure to set people together by the ears, or as—

Ran. 'Sdeath! is this a time for similitudes?

Dap. You have made me miscarry of a good thought now, let me perish!

Ran. Go presently to St. James's gate, where you are to expect the coming of a lady ('tis Christina), accompanied by that woman you saw e'en now. She will permit you to put her into a chair, and then conduct her to my lodging; while I go before to remove some spies, and prepare it for her reception.

Dap. Your lodging? had you not better carry her to Vincent's? 'tis hard by; and there a vizard mask has as free egress and regress as at the playhouse.

Ran. Faith, though it be not very prudent, yet she shall come thither in my vindication; for he would not believe I had seen her last night.

Dap. To have a fine woman, and not tell on't as you say, Mr. Ranger—

Ran. Go, and bring her to Vincent's lodging; there I'll expect you. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE IV.—*The Street before* VINCENT'S *Lodging.*

Enter CHRISTINA *and* ISABEL.

Isa. This is the door, madam; here Mr. Vincent lodges.

Chri. 'Tis no matter, we will pass it by; lest the people of our lodgings should watch us. But if he should not be here now!

Isa. Who, Mr. Valentine, madam? I warrant you my intelligencer dares not fail me.

Chri. Did he come last night, said he?

Isa. Last night late.

Chri. And not see me yet! nay, not send to me! —'tis false, he is not come,—I wish he were not. I know not which I should take more unkindly from him, exposing his life to his revengeful enemies, or being almost four-and-twenty hours so near me, and not let me know't.

Isa. A lover's dangers are the only secrets kept from his mistress; he came not to you because he would not purchase his happiness with your fear and apprehensions.

Chri. Nay, he is come, I see, since you are come about again of his side.

Isa. Will you go in, madam, and disprove me, if you can? 'tis better than standing in the street.

Chri. We'll go a little further first, and return. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—VINCENT'S *Lodging.*

Enter VINCENT *and* VALENTINE.

Vin. I told you I had sent my man to Christina's this morning, to inquire of her maid, (who

seldom denies him a secret,) if her lady had been at the Park last night; which she peremptorily answered to the contrary, and assured him she had not stirred out since your departure.

Val. Will not chambermaids lie, Vincent?

Vin. Will not Ranger lie, Valentine?

Val. The circumstances of his story proved it true.

Vin. Do you think so old a master in the faculty as he will want the varnish of probability for his lies?

Val. Do you think a woman, having the advantage of her sex, and education under such a mistress, will want impudence to disavow a truth that might be prejudicial to that mistress?

Vin. But if both testimonies are fallible, why will you needs believe his? we are apter to believe the things we would have, than those we would not.

Val. My ill luck has taught me to credit my misfortunes and doubt my happiness.

Vin. But fortune we know inconstant.

Val. And all of her sex.

Vin. Will you judge of fortune by your experience, and not do your mistress the same justice? Go see her, and satisfy yourself and her; for if she be innocent, consider how culpable you are, not only in your censures of her, but in not seeing her since your coming.

Val. If she be innocent, I should be afraid to surprise her, for her sake; if false, I should be afraid to surprise her, for my own.

Vin. To be jealous and not inquisitive is as hard as to love extremely and not to be something jealous.

Val. Inquisitiveness as seldom cures jealousy, as drinking in a fever quenches the thirst.

Vin. If she were at the Park last night, 'tis probable she'll not miss this. Go watch her house, see who goes out, who in; while I, in the meantime, search out Ranger; who, I'll pawn my life, upon more discourse shall avow his mistake.—Here he is; go in:—how luckily is he come!

[VALENTINE *retires to the door behind.*

Enter RANGER.

Ranger, you have prevented me: I was going to look you out, between the scenes at the playhouse, the coffee-house, tennis-court, or Gifford's.

Ran. Do you want a pretence to go to a bawdy-house?—but I have other visits to make.

Vin. I forget. I should rather have sought you in Christina's lodgings, ha! ha! ha!

Ran. Well, well, I'm just come to tell you that Christina——

Vin. Proves not, by daylight, the kind lady you followed last night out of the Park.

Ran. I have better news for you, to my thinking.

Vin. What is't?

Ran. Not that I have been in Christina's lodging this morning; but that she'll be presently here in your lodging with me.

Val. How! [*Aside.*

Vin. [*Retiring, and speaking softly to* VALENTINE.] You see now, his report was a jest, a mere jest.—[*To* RANGER.] Well, must my lodging be your vaulting-school still? thou hast appointed a wench to come hither, I find.

Ran. A wench! you seemed to have more reverence for Christina last night.

Vin. Now you talk of Christina, prithee tell me what was the meaning of thy last night's romance of Christina.

Ran. You shall know the meaning of all when Christina comes; she'll be here presently.

Vin. Who will? Christina?

Ran. Yes, Christina.

Vin. Ha! ha! ha!

Ran. Incredulous envy! thou art as envious as an impotent lecher at a wedding.

Vin. Thou art either mad, or as vain as a Frenchman newly returned home from a campaign, or obliging England.

Ran. Thou art as envious as a rival; but if thou art mine, there's that will make you desist; [*gives him a letter.*] and if you are not my rival, entrusting you with such a secret will, I know, oblige you to keep it, and assist me against all other interests.

Vin. Do you think I take your secret as an obligation? don't I know, lovers, travellers, and poets, will give money to be heard? But what's the paper? a lampoon upon Christina, hatched last night betwixt squire Dapperwit and you, because her maid used you scurvily?

Ran. No, 'tis only a letter from her, to show my company was not so disgustful to her last night, but that she desires it again to-day.

Val. A letter from her! [*Aside.*

Vin. A letter from Christina! [*Reads.*]—Ha! ha! ha!

Ran. Nay, 'tis pleasant.

Vin. You mistake, I laugh at you, not the letter.

Ran. I am like the winning gamester, so pleased with my luck, I will not quarrel with any who calls me a fool for't.

Vin. Is this the style of a woman of honour?

Ran. It may be, for aught you know; I'm sure 'tis well if your female correspondents can read.

Vin. I must confess I have none of the little letters, half name or title, like your Spanish Epistles Dedicatory; but that a man so frequent in honourable intrigues as you are, should not know the summons of an impudent common woman, from that of a person of honour!

Ran. Christina is so much a person of honour she'll own what she has writ when she comes.

Vin. But will she come hither indeed?

Ran. Immediately. You'll excuse my liberty with you; I could not conceal such a happiness from such a friend as you, lest you should have taken it unkindly.

Vin. Faith, you have obliged me indeed; for you and others would often have made me believe your honourable intrigues, but never did me the honour to convince me of 'em before.

Ran. You are merry, I find, yet.

Vin. When you are happy I cannot be otherwise.

Ran. [*Aside.*] But I lose time; I should lay a little person in ambush, that lives hard by, in case Christina should be impatient to be revenged of her friends, as it often happens with a discontented heiress. Women, like old soldiers, more nimbly execute than they resolve. [*Going out.*

Vin. What now! you will not disappoint a woman of Christina's quality?

Ran. I'll be here before she comes, I warrant you. [*Exit.*

Vin. I do believe you truly!—What think you, Valentine?

Val. [*Coming forward.*] I think, since she has

the courage to challenge him, she'll have the honour of being first in the field.

Vin. Fy, your opinion of her must be as bad, as Ranger's of himself is good, to think she would write to him. I long till his bona-roba comes, that you may be both disabused.

Val. And I have not patience to stay her coming, lest you should be disabused.

Enter CHRISTINA *and* ISABEL.

Vin. Here she is, i'faith; I'm glad she's come.

Val. And I'm sorry. But I will to my post again, lest she should say she came to me. [*Retires as before.*

Vin. [*Aside.*] By heavens, Christina herself! 'tis she! [CHRISTINA *pulls off her mask.*

Val. 'Tis she:—cursed be these eyes! more cursed than when they first betrayed me to that false bewitching face. [*Aside.*

Chri. You may wonder, sir, to see me here—

Vin. I must confess I do.

Chri. But the confidence your friend has in you is the cause of mine; and yet some blushes it does cost me to come to seek for a man.

Val. Modest creature! [*Aside.*

✓ *Vin.* How am I deceived! [*Aside.*

Chri. Where is he, sir? why does he not appear, to keep me in countenance? pray call him, sir; 'tis something hard if he should know I'm here.

Vin. I hardly can myself believe you are here, madam.

Chri. If my visit be troublesome or unseasonable, 'tis your friend's fault; I designed it not to you, sir. Pray call him out, that he may excuse it, and take it on himself, together with my shame.

Vin. How impatient she is! [*Aside.*

Chri. Or do you delay the happiness I ask, to make it more welcome? I have stayed too long for it already, and cannot more desire it. Dear sir, call him out. Where is he? above, or here within? I'll snatch the favour which you will not give. —[*Goes to the door and discovers* VALENTINE.] What! do you hide yourself for shame?

Val. [*Coming forward.*] I must confess I do.

Chri. To see me come hither——

Val. I acknowledge it. [VALENTINE *offers to go out.*

Chri. Before you came to me? But whither do you go? come, I can forgive you.

Val. But I cannot forgive you.

Chri. Whither do you go? you need not forge a quarrel to prevent mine to you: nor need you try if I would follow you, you know I will;—I have, you see.

Val. That impudence should look so like innocence! [*Aside.*

Chri. Whither would you go? why would you go?

Val. To call your servant to you.

Chri. She is here; what would you have with her?

Val. I mean your lover,—the man you came to meet.

Chri. Oh heavens! what lover? what man? I came to see no man but you, whom I had too long lost.

Val. You could not know that I was here.

Chri. Ask her; 'twas she that told me. [*Points to* ISABEL.

Val. How could she know?

Chri. That you shall know hereafter.

Val. No, you thought me too far out of the way to disturb your assignation; and I assure you, madam, 'twas my ill-fortune, not my design: and that it may appear so, I do withdraw, as in all good breeding and civility I am obliged; for sure your wished-for lover's coming.

Chri. What do you mean? are you a-weary of that title?

Val. I am ashamed of it, since it grows common. [*Going out.*

Chri. Nay, you will not, shall not go.

Val. My stay might give him jealousy, and so do you injury, and him the greatest in the world: heavens forbid! I would not make a man jealous; for though you call a thousand vows, and oaths, and tears to witness (as you safely may), that you have not the least of love for me, yet if he ever knew how I have loved you, sure he would not, could not believe you.

Chri. I do confess, your riddle is too hard for me to solve; therefore you are obliged to do't yourself.

Val. I wish it were capable of any other interpretation than what you know already.

Chri. Is this that generous good Valentine? who has disguised him so? [*Weeps.*

Vin. Nay, I must withhold you then. [*Stops* VALENTINE *going out.*] Methinks she should be innocent; her tongue, and eyes, together with that flood that swells 'em, do vindicate her heart. ✓

Val. They show but their long practice of dissimulation. [*Going out.*

Vin. Come back: I hear Ranger coming up: stay but till he comes.

Val. Do you think I have the patience of an alderman?

Vin. You may go out this way, when you will, by the back-stairs; but stay a little, till—Oh, here he comes.

Re-enter RANGER. *Upon his entrance* CHRISTINA *puts on her mask.*

Val. My revenge will now detain me. [VALENTINE *retires again.*

Ran. [*Aside.*]—What, come already! where is Dapperwit?—[*Aloud.*] The blessing's double that comes quickly; I did not yet expect you here, otherwise I had done myself the injury to be absent. But I hope, madam, I have not made you stay long for me.

Chri. I have not staid at all for you.

Ran. I am glad of it, madam.

Chri. [*To* ISABEL.] Is not this that troublesome stranger who last night followed the lady into my lodgings?—[*Aside.*] 'Tis he. [*Removing from him to the other side.*

Ran. [*Aside.*] Why does she remove so disdainfully from me?—[*Aloud.*] I find you take it ill I was not at your coming here, madam.

Chri. Indeed I do not; you are mistaken, sir.

Ran. Confirm me by a smile then, madam; remove that cloud, which makes me apprehend foul weather. [*Goes to take off her mask.*]—Mr. Vincent, pray retire; 'tis you keep on the lady's mask, and no displeasure which she has for me.—Yet, madam, you need not distrust his honour or his faith.—But do not keep the lady under constraint; pray leave us a little, master Vincent.

Chri. You must not leave us, sir; would you leave me with a stranger?

Val. How's that! [*Aside.*

Ran. [*Aside.*] I've done amiss, I find; to bring her hither.—Madam, I understand you— [*Apart to* CHRISTINA.

Chri. Sir, I do not understand you.

Ran. You would not be known to Mr. Vincent.

Chri. 'Tis your acquaintance I would avoid.

Ran. [*Aside.*] Dull brute that I was, to bring her hither!—I have found my error, madam; give me but a new appointment, where I may meet you by and by, and straight I will withdraw as if I knew you not. [*Softly to her.*

Chri. Why, do you know me?

Ran. [*Aside.*] I must not own it.—No, madam, but— [*Offers to whisper.*

Chri. Whispering, sir, argues an old acquaintance; but I have not the vanity to be thought of yours, and resolve you shall never have the disparagement of mine.—Mr. Vincent, pray let us go in here.

Ran. How's this! I am undone, I see; but if I let her go thus, I shall be an eternal laughing-stock to Vincent. [*Aside.*

Vin. Do you not know him, madam? I thought you had come hither on purpose to meet him.

Chri. To meet him!

Vin. By your own appointment.

Chri. What strange infatuation does delude you all? you know, he said he did not know me.

Vin. You writ to him; he has your letter.

Chri. Then, you know my name sure? yet you confessed but now you knew me not.

Ran. I must confess your anger has disguised you more than your mask; for I thought to have met a kinder Christina here.

Chri. [*Aside.*] Heavens! how could he know me in this place? he watched me hither sure; or is there any other of my name.—[*Aloud.*] That you may no longer mistake me for your Christina, I'll pull off that which soothes your error. [*Pulls off her mask.*

Ran. Take but t'other vizard off too, (I mean your anger,) and I'll swear you are the same, and only Christina which I wished, and thought, to meet here.

Chri. How could you think to meet me here?

Ran. [*Gives her the letter.*] By virtue of this your commission; which now, I see, was meant a real challenge: for you look as if you would fight with me.

Chri. The paper is a stranger to me; I never writ it. You are abused.

Vin. Christina is a person of honour, and will own what she has written, Ranger.

Ran. [*Aside.*] So! the comedy begins; I shall be laughed at sufficiently if I do not justify myself; I must set my impudence to hers. She is resolved to deny all, I see, and I have lost all hope of her.

Vin. Come, faith, Ranger—

Ran. You will deny too, madam, that I followed you last night from the Park to your lodging, where I staid with you till morning? you never saw me before, I warrant.

Chri. That you rudely intruded last night into my lodging, I cannot deny; but I wonder you have the confidence to brag of it: sure you will not of your reception?

Ran. I never was so ill-bred as to brag of my reception in a lady's chamber; not a word of that, madam.

Val. [*Aside.*] How! if he lies, I revenge her; if it be true, I revenge myself.

[VALENTINE *draws his sword, which* VINCENT *seeing, thrusts him back, and shuts the door upon him before he is discovered by* RANGER.

Enter LYDIA *and* LEONORE, *stopping at the door.*

Lyd. What do I see! Christina with him! a counter-plot to mine, to make me and it ridiculous. 'Tis true, I find, they have been long acquainted, and I long abused; but since she intends a triumph, in spite, as well as shame, (not emulation,) I retire. She deserves no envy, who will be shortly in my condition; his natural inconstancy will prove my best revenge on her—on both. [*Exeunt* LYDIA *and* LEONORE.

Enter DAPPERWIT.

Dap. Christina's going away again;—what's the matter?

Ran. What do you mean?

Dap. I scarce had paid the chairmen, and was coming up after her, but I met her on the stairs, in as much haste as if she had been frightened.

Ran. Who do you talk of?

Dap. Christina, whom I took up in a chair just now at St. James's gate.

Ran. Thou art mad! here she is, this is Christina.

Dap. I must confess I did not see her face; but I am sure the lady is gone that I brought just now.

Ran. I tell you again this is she: did you bring two?

Chri. I came in no chair, had no guide but my woman there.

Vin. When did you bring your lady, Dapperwit?

Dap. Even now, just now.

Vin. This lady has been here half-an-hour.

Ran. He knows not what he says, he is mad: you are all so; I am so too.

Vin. 'Tis the best excuse you can make for yourself, and by owning your mistake you'll show you are come to yourself. I myself saw your woman at the door, who but looked in, and then immediately went down again;—as your friend Dapperwit too affirms.

Chri. You had best follow her that looked for you; and I'll go seek out him I came to see.—Mr. Vincent, pray let me in here.

Ran. 'Tis very fine! wondrous fine!

[CHRISTINA *goes out a little, and returns.*

Chri. Oh! he is gone! Mr. Vincent, follow him; he were yet more severe to me, in endangering his life, than in his censures against me. You know the power of his enemies is great as their malice;—just Heaven preserve him from them, and me from this ill or unlucky man!

[*Exeunt* CHRISTINA, ISABEL, *and* VINCENT.

Ran. 'Tis well — nay, certainly, I shall never be master of my senses more; but why dost thou help to distract me too?

Dap. My astonishment was as great as yours to see her go away again; I would have stayed her if I could.

Ran. Yet again talking of a woman you met going out, when I talk of Christina!

Dap. I talk of Christina too.

Ran. She went out just now; the woman you found me with was she.

Dap. That was not the Christina I brought just now.

Ran. You brought her almost half an hour ago;—'sdeath, will you give me the lie?

Dap. A lady disappointed by her gallant, the night before her journey, could not be more touchy with her maid or husband, than you are with me now after your disappointment; but if you thank me so, I'll go serve myself hereafter. For aught I know, I have disappointed Mrs. Martha for you, and may lose thirty thousand pounds by the bargain. Farewell! a raving lover is fit for solitude. [*Exit.*

Ran. Lydia, triumph! I now am thine again. Of intrigues, honourable or dishonourable, and all sorts of rambling, I take my leave; when we are giddy, 'tis time to stand still. Why should we be so fond of the by-paths of love, where we are still waylaid with surprises, trepans, dangers, and murdering disappointments?—

Just as at blindman's buff we run at all,
Whilst those that lead us laugh to see us fall;
And when we think we hold the lady fast,
We find it but her scarf, or veil, at last. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*St. James's Park.*

Enter DAPPERWIT *and* SIR SIMON ADDLEPLOT, *the latter leading* MRS. MARTHA.

Sir Sim. At length you see I have freed the captive lady for her longing knight, Mr. Dapperwit:—who brings off a plot cleverly now?

Dap. I wish our poets were half so good at it. —Mrs. Martha, a thousand welcomes!

[DAPPERWIT *kisses and embraces* MRS. MARTHA.

Sir Sim. Hold, hold, sir! your joy is a little too familiar, faith and troth!

Dap. Will you not let me salute Mrs. Martha?

Mar. What, Jonas, do you think I do not know good breeding? must I be taught by you?

Sir Sim. I would have kept the maidenhead of your lips for your sweet knight, Mrs. Martha, that's all; I dare swear you never kissed any man before but your father.

Mar. My sweet knight, if he will be knight of mine, must be contented with what he finds, as well as other knights.

Sir Sim. So smart already, faith and troth!

Mar. Dear Mr. Dapperwit, I am overjoyed to see you; but I thank honest Jonas for't.

[*She hugs* DAPPERWIT.

Sir Sim. [*Aside.*] How she hugs him!

Mar. Poor Mr. Dapperwit, I thought I should never have seen you again; but I thank honest Jonas there—

Sir Sim. Do not thank me, Mrs. Martha, any more than I thank you.

Mar. I would not be ungrateful, Jonas.

Sir Sim. Then reserve your kindness only for your worthy, noble, brave, heroic knight, who loves you only, and only deserves your kindness.

Mar. I will show my kindness to my worthy, brave, heroic knight, in being kind to his friend, his dear friend, who helped him to me.

[*Hugs* DAPPERWIT *again.*

Sir Sim. But, mistress Martha, he is not to help him always; though he helps him to be married, he is not to help him when he is married.

Mar. What, Mr. Dapperwit, will you love my worthy knight less after marriage than before? that were against the custom; for marriage gets a man friends, instead of losing those he has.

Dap. I will ever be his servant and yours, dear madam; do 'not doubt me.

Mar. I do not, sweet dear Mr. Dapperwit; but I should not have seen you these two days if it had not been for honest Jonas there—

[*She kisses* DAPPERWIT.

Sir Sim. [*Apart to* DAPPERWIT.] For shame! though she be young and foolish, do not you wrong me to my face.

Dap. Would you have me so ill bred as to repulse her innocent kindness?—what a thing it is to want wit!

Sir Sim. [*Aside.*] A pox! I must make haste to discover myself, or I shall discover what I would not discover; but if I should discover myself in this habit, 'twould not be to my advantage. But I'll go, put on my own clothes, and look like a knight.—[*Aloud.*] Well, Mrs. Martha, I'll go seek out your knight: are you not impatient to see him?

Mar. Wives must be obedient; let him take his own time.

Sir Sim. Can you trust yourself a turn or two with master Dapperwit?

Mar. Yes, yes, Jonas—as long as you will.

Sir Sim. [*Aside.*] But I would not trust you with him, if I could help it:—

So married wight sees what he dares not blame;
And cannot budge for fear, nor stay for shame.

[*Exit.*

Dap. I am glad he is gone, that I may laugh. 'Tis such a miracle of fops, that his conversation should be pleasant to me, even when it hindered me of yours.

Mar. Indeed I'm glad he is gone too, as pleasant as he is.

Dap. I know why, I know why, sweet Mrs. Martha. I warrant you, you had rather have the parson's company than his?—now you are out of your father's house, 'tis time to leave being a hypocrite.

Mar. Well, for the jest's sake, to disappoint my knight, I would not care if I disappointed myself of a ladyship.

Dap. Come, I will not keep you on the tenters; I know you have a mind to make sure of me: I have a little chaplain (I wish he were a bishop or one of the friars) to perfect our revenge upon that zealous Jew, your father.

Mar. Do not speak ill of my father; he has been your friend, I'm sure.

Dap. My friend!

Mar. His hard usage of me conspired with your good mien and wit, and to avoid slavery under him, I stoop to your yoke.

Dap. I will be obliged to your father for nothing but a portion; nor to you for your love; 'twas due to my merit.

Mar. You show yourself sir Simon's original; if 'twere not for that vanity—

Dap. I should be no wit—'tis the badge of my calling; for you can no more find a man of wit without vanity than a fine woman without affectation: but let us go before the knight comes again.

Mar. Let us go before my father comes; he soon will have the intelligence.

Dap. Stay, let me think a little. [*Pauses.*

Mar. What are you thinking of? you should have thought before this time, or I should have thought rather.

Dap. Peace! peace!

Mar. What are you thinking of?

Dap. I am thinking what a wit without vanity is like. He is like—

Mar. You do not think we are in a public place, and may be surprised and prevented by my father's scouts!

Dap. What! would you have me lose my thought?

Mar. You would rather lose your mistress, it seems.

Dap. He is like—I think I am a sot to-night, let me perish!

Mar. Nay, if you are so in love with your thought— [*Offers to go.*

Dap. Are you so impatient to be my wife? —He is like—he is like—a picture without shadows, or—or—a face without patches—or a diamond without a foil. These are new thoughts now, these are new!

Mar. You are wedded already to your thoughts, I see;—good night.

Dap. Madam, do not take it ill:—

For loss of happy thought there's no amends;
For his new jest, true wit will lose old friends.

That's new again,—the thought's new. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Another part of the same.*

Enter GRIPE, *leading* LUCY; JOYNER *and* MRS. CROSSBITE *following.*

Gripe. Mrs. Joyner, I can conform to this mode of public walking by moonlight, because one is not known.

Lucy. Why, are you ashamed of your company?

Gripe. No, pretty one; because in the dark, or as it were in the dark, there is no envy nor scandal. I would neither lose you nor my reputation.

Joyn. Your reputation! indeed, your worship, 'tis well known there are as grave men as your worship; nay, men in office too, that adjourn their cares and businesses, to come and unbend themselves at night here with a little vizard-mask.

Gripe. I do believe it, Mrs. Joyner.

Lucy. Ay, godmother, and carries and treats her at Mulberry-garden.

Cros. Nay, does not only treat her, but gives her his whole gleaning of that day.

Gripe. They may, they may, Mrs. Crossbite; they take above six in the hundred.

Cros. Nay, there are those of so much worth and honour and love, that they'll take it from their wives and children to give it to their misses; now your worship has no wife, and but one child.

Gripe. Still for my edification! [*Aside.*

Joyn. That's true, indeed; for I know a great lady that cannot follow her husband abroad to his haunts, because her Ferrandine is so ragged and greasy, whilst his mistress is as fine as fi'pence, in embroidered satins.

Gripe. Politicly done of him indeed! If the truth were known, he is a statesman by that, umph—

Cros. Truly, your women of quality are very troublesome to their husbands; I have heard 'em complain, they will allow them no separate maintenance, though the honourable jilts themselves will not marry without it.

Joyn. Come, come, mistress; sometimes 'tis the craft of those gentlemen to complain of their wives' expenses to excuse their own narrowness to their misses; but your daughter has a gallant that can make no excuse.

Gripe. So, Mrs. Joyner!—my friend, Mrs. Joyner—

Cros. I hope, indeed, he'll give my daughter no cause to dun him; for, poor wretch! she is as modest as her mother.

Gripe. I profess, I believe it.

Lucy. But I have the boldness to ask him for a treat.—Come, gallant, we must walk towards the Mulberry-garden.

Gripe. So!—I am afraid, little mistress, the rooms are all taken up by this time.

Joyn. Will you shame yourself again? [*Aside to* GRIPE.

Lucy. If the rooms be full, we'll have an arbour.

Gripe. At this time of night!—besides, the waiters will ne'er come near you.

Lucy. They will be observant of good customers, as we shall be. Come along.

Gripe. Indeed, and verily, little mistress, I would go, but that I should be foresworn if I did.

Joyn. That's so pitiful an excuse!—

Gripe. In truth, I have foresworn the place ever since I was pawned there for a reckoning.

Lucy. You have broken many an oath for the good old cause, and will you boggle at one for your poor little miss? Come along.

Enter Lady FLIPPANT *behind.*

Flip. Unfortunate lady that I am! I have left the herd on purpose to be chased, and have wandered this hour here; but the Park affords not so much as a satyr for me, and (that's strange!) no Burgundy man or drunken scourer will reel my way. The rag-women, and cinder-women, have better luck than I.—But who are these? if this mongrel light does not deceive me, 'tis my brother, —'tis he:—there's Joyner, too, and two other women. I'll follow 'em. It must be he, for this world hath nothing like him;—I know not what the devil may be in the other. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Another part of the same.*

Enter SIR SIMON ADDLEPOT, *in fine clothes,* DAPPERWIT *and* MRS. MARTHA, *unseen by him at the door.*

Sir Sim. Well, after all my seeking, I can find those I would not find; I'm sure 'twas old Gripe, and Joyner with him, and the widow followed. He would not have been here, but to have sought

his daughter, sure; but vigilant Dapperwit has spied him too, and has, no doubt, secured her from him.

Dap. And you. [*Aside.*

Sir Sim. The rogue is as good at hiding, as I am at stealing, a mistress. 'Tis a vain, conceited fellow, yet I think 'tis an honest fellow:—but, again, he is a damnable whoring fellow; and what opportunity this air and darkness may incline 'em to, heaven knows; for I have heard the rogue say himself, a lady will no more show her modesty in the dark than a Spaniard his courage.

Dap. Ha! ha! ha!—

Sir Sim. Nay, if you are there, my true friend, I'll forgive your hearkening, if you'll forgive my censures.—I speak to you, dear madam Martha; dear, dear—behold your worthy knight—

Mar. That's far from neighbours.

Sir Sim. Is come to reap the fruit of his labours.

Mar. I cannot see the knight; well, but I'm sure I hear Jonas.

Sir Sim. I am no Jonas, Mrs. Martha.

Mar. The night is not so dark, nor the peruke so big, but I can discern Jonas.

Sir Sim. Faith and troth, I am the very sir Simon Addleplot that is to marry you; the same Dapperwit solicited you for; ask him else, my name is not Jonas.

Mar. You think my youth and simplicity capable of this cheat; but let me tell you, Jonas, 'tis not your borrowed clothes and titles shall make me marry my father's man.

Sir Sim. Borrowed title! I'll be sworn I bought it of my laundress, who was a court-laundress; but, indeed, my clothes I have not paid for; therefore, in that sense, they are borrowed.

Mar. Prithee, Jonas, let the jest end, or I shall be presently in earnest.

Sir Sim. Pray, be in earnest, and let us go; the parson and supper stay for us, and I am a knight in earnest.

Mar. You a knight! insolent, saucy fool.

Sir Sim. The devil take me, Mrs. Martha, if I am not a knight now! a knight-baronet too! A man ought, I see, to carry his patent in his pocket when he goes to be married; 'tis more necessary than a licence. I am a knight indeed and indeed now, Mrs. Martha.

Mar. Indeed and indeed, the trick will not pass, Jonas.

Sir Sim. Poor wretch! she's afraid she shall not be a lady.—Come, come, discover the intrigue, Dapperwit.

Mar. You need not discover the intrigue, 'tis apparent already. Unworthy Mr. Dapperwit! after my confidence reposed in you, could you be so little generous as to betray me to my father's man? but I'll be even with you.

Sir Sim. Do not accuse him, poor man! before you hear him.—Tell her the intrigue, man.

Dap. A pox! she will not believe us.

Sir Sim. Will you not excuse yourself? but I must not let it rest so.—Know, then, Mrs. Martha—

Mar. Come, I forgive thee before thy confession, Jonas; you never had had the confidence to have designed this cheat upon me but from Mr. Dapperwit's encouragement—'twas his plot.

Sir Sim. Nay, do not do me that wrong, madam.

Mar. But since he has trepanned me out of my father's house, he is like to keep me as long as I live; and so good night, Jonas.

Sir Sim. Hold, hold, what d'ye mean both? prithee, tell her I am sir Simon, and no Jonas.

Dap. A pox! she will not believe us, I tell you.

Sir Sim. I have provided a parson and supper at Mulberry-garden, and invited all my friends I could meet in the Park.

Dap. Nay, rather than they shall be disappointed, there shall be a bride and bridegroom to entertain 'em; Mrs. Martha and I will go thither presently.

Sir Sim. Why, shall she be your bride?

Dap. You see she will have it so.

Sir Sim. Will you make Dapperwit your husband?

Mar. Rather than my father's man.

Sir Sim. Oh, the devil!

Mar. Nay, come along, Jonas, you shall make one at the wedding, since you helped to contrive it.

Sir Sim. Will you cheat yourself, for fear of being cheated?

Mar. I am desperate now.

Sir Sim. Wilt thou let her do so ill a thing, Dapperwit, as to marry thee? open her eyes, prithee, and tell her I am a true knight.

Dap. 'Twould be in vain, by my life! you have carried yourself so like a natural clerk—and so adieu, good Jonas. [*Exeunt* MARTHA *and* DAPPERWIT.

Sir Sim. What! ruined by my own plot, like an old cavalier! yet like him, too, I will plot on still, a plot of prevention. So! I have it—her father was here even now, I'm sure; well—I'll go tell her father of her, that I will!

And punish so her folly and his treachery:
Revenge is sweet, and makes amends for lechery.
[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Another part of the same.*

Enter LYDIA *and* LEONORE.

Lyd. I wish I had not come hither to-night, Leonore.

Leo. Why did you, madam, if the place be so disagreeable to you?

Lyd. We cannot help visiting the place often where we have lost anything we value: I lost Ranger here last night.

Leo. You thought you had lost him before, a great while ago; and therefore you ought to be the less troubled.

Lyd. But 'twas here I missed him first, I'm sure.

Leo. Come, madam, let not the loss vex you; he is not worth the looking after.

Lyd. It cannot but vex me yet, if I lost him by my own fault.

Leo. You had but too much care to keep him.

Lyd. It often happens, indeed, that too much care is as bad as negligence; but I had rather be robbed than lose what I have carelessly.

Leo. But, I believe you would hang the thief if you could.

Lyd. Not if I could have my own again.

Leo. I see you would be too merciful.

Lyd. I wish I were tried.

Leo. But, madam, if you please, we will waive the discourse; for people seldom (I suppose) talk with pleasure of their real losses.

Lyd. 'Tis better than to ruminate on them; mine, I'm sure, will not out of head nor heart.

Leo. Grief is so far from retrieving a loss, that it makes it greater; but the way to lessen it is by a comparison with others' losses. Here are ladies in the Park of your acquaintance, I doubt not, can compare with you; pray, madam, let us walk and find 'em out.

Lyd. 'Tis the resentment, you say, makes the loss great or little; and then, I'm sure, there is none like mine: however, go on. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*Another part of the same.*

Enter VINCENT *and* VALENTINE.

Vin. I am glad I have found you, for now I am prepared to lead you out of the dark and all your trouble: I have good news.

Val. You are as unmerciful as the physician who with new arts keeps his miserable patient alive and in hopes, when he knows the disease is incurable.

Vin. And you, like the melancholy patient, mistrust and hate your physician, because he will not comply with your despair: but I'll cure your jealousy now.

Val. You know, all diseases grow worse by relapses.

Vin. Trust me once more.

Val. Well, you may try your experiments upon me.

Vin. Just as I shut the door upon you, the woman Ranger expected came up stairs; but finding another woman in discourse with him, went down again; I suppose, as jealous of him, as you of Christina.

Val. How does it appear she came to Ranger?

Vin. Thus: Dapperwit came up after he had brought her, just then, in a chair from St. James's by Ranger's appointment; and it is certain your Christina came to you.

Val. How can that be? for she knew not I was in the kingdom.

Vin. My man confesses, when I sent him to inquire of her woman about her lady's being here in the Park last night, he told her you were come; and she, it seems, told her mistress.

Val. [*Aside.*] That might be.—[*Aloud.*] But did not Christina confess, Ranger was in her lodging last night?

Vin. By intrusion, which she had more particularly informed me of, if her apprehensions of your danger had not posted me after you; she not having yet (as I suppose) heard of Clerimont's recovery. I left her, poor creature! at home, distracted with a thousand fears for your life and love.

Val. Her love, I'm sure, has cost me more fears than my life; yet that little danger is not past (as you think) till the great one be over.

Vin. Open but your eyes, and the fantastic goblin's vanished, and all your idle fears will turn to shame; for jealousy is the basest cowardice.

Val. I had rather, indeed, blush for myself than her.

Vin. I'm sure you will have more reason. But is not that Ranger there?

Enter RANGER, *followed by* CHRISTINA *and* ISABEL; *after them* LYDIA *and* LEONORE.

Val. I think it is.

Vin. I suppose his friend Dapperwit is not far off; I will examine them both before you, and not leave you so much as the shadow of doubt: Ranger's astonishment at my lodging confessed his mistake.

Val. His astonishment might proceed from Christina's unexpected strangeness to him.

Vin. He shall satisfy you now himself to the contrary, I warrant you; have but patience.

Val. I had rather, indeed, he should satisfy my doubts than my revenge; therefore I can have patience.

Vin. But what women are those that follow him?

Val. Stay a little—

Ran. Lydia, Lydia—poor Lydia!

Lyd. If she be my rival, 'tis some comfort yet to see her follow him, rather than he her. [*To* LEONORE.

Leo. But if you follow them a little longer, for your comfort you shall see them go hand in hand.

Chri. Sir! sir!— [*To* RANGER.

Leo. She calls to him already.

Lyd. But he does not hear, you see; let us go a little nearer.

Vin. Sure it is Ranger!

Val. As sure as the woman that follows him closest is Christina.

Vin. For shame! talk not of Christina; I left her just now at home, surrounded with so many fears and griefs she could not stir.

Val. She is come, it may be, to divert them here in the Park; I'm sure 'tis she.

Vin. When the moon, at this instant, scarce affords light enough to distinguish a man from a tree, how can you know her?

Val. How can you know Ranger, then?

Vin. I heard him speak.

Val. So you may her too, I'll secure you, if you will draw but a little nearer; she came, doubtless, to no other end but to speak with him: observe—

Chri. [*To* RANGER.] Sir, I have followed you hitherto; but now, I must desire you to follow me out of the company; for I would not be overheard nor disturbed.

Ran. Ha! is not this Christina's voice? it is, I am sure; I cannot be deceived now.—Dear madam—

Vin. It is she indeed. [*Apart to* VALENTINE.

Val. Is it so?

Chri. Come, sir— [*To* RANGER.

Val. Nay, I'll follow you too, though not invited. [*Aside.*

Lyd. I must not, cannot stay behind. [*Aside.*

[*They all go off together in a huddle hastily.*

Re-enter CHRISTINA, ISABEL, *and* VALENTINE, *on the other side.*

Chri. Come along, sir.

Val. So! I must stick to her when all is done; her new servant has lost her in the crowd, she has gone too fast for him; so much my revenge is swifter than his love. Now shall I not only have the deserted lover's revenge, of disappointing her of her new man, but an opportunity infallibly at once to discover her falseness, and confront her impudence. [*Aside.*

Chri. Pray come along, sir, I am in haste.

Val. So eager, indeed!—I wish that cloud may yet withhold the moon, that this false woman may not discover me before I do her. [*Aside.*

Chri. Here no one can hear us, and I'm sure we cannot see one another.

Val. 'Sdeath! what have I giddily run myself upon? 'Tis rather a trial of myself than her;—I cannot undergo it. [*Aside.*

Chri. Come nearer, sir.

Val. Hell and vengeance! I cannot suffer it—I cannot. [*Aside.*

Chri. Come, come; yet nearer, — pray come nearer.

Val. It is impossible! I cannot hold! I must discover myself, rather than her infamy. [*Aside.*

Chri. You are conscious, it seems, of the wrong you have done me, and are ashamed, though in the dark. [*Speaks, walking slowly.*

Val. How's this! [*Aside.*

Chri. I'm glad to find it so; for all my business with you is, to show you your late mistakes, and force a confession from you of those unmannerly injuries you have done me.

Val. What! I think she's honest; or does she know me?—sure she cannot. [*Aside.*

Chri. First, your intrusion, last night, into my lodging; which, I suppose, has begot your other gross mistakes.

Val. No, she takes me for Ranger, I see again. [*Aside.*

Chri. You are to know, then, (since needs you must,) it was not me you followed last night to my lodging from the Park, but some kinswoman of yours, it seems, whose fear of being discovered by you prevailed with me to personate her, while she withdrew, our habits and our statures being much alike; which I did with as much difficulty, as she used importunity to make me; and all this my lady Flippant can witness, who was then with your cousin.

Val. I am glad to hear this. [*Aside.*

Chri. Now, what your claim to me, at Mr. Vincent's lodging, meant; the letter and promises you unworthily, or erroneously, laid to my charge, you must explain to me and others, or—

Val. How's this! I hope I shall discover no guilt but my own:—she would not speak in threats to a lover. [*Aside.*

Chri. Was it because you found me in Mr. Vincent's lodgings you took a liberty to use me like one of your common visitants? but know, I came no more to Mr. Vincent than you. Yet, I confess, my visit was intended to a man—a brave man, till you made him use a woman ill; worthy the love of a princess, till you made him censure mine; good as angels, till you made him unjust:—why, in the name of honour, would you do't?

Val. How happily am I disappointed!—poor, injured Christina! [*Aside.*

Chri. He would have sought me out first, if you had not made him fly from me. Our mutual love, confirmed by a contract, made our hearts inseparable, till you rudely, if not maliciously, thrust in upon us, and broke the close and happy knot: I had lost him before for a month, now for ever. [*Weeps.*

Val. My joy and pity makes me as mute as my shame; yet I must discover myself. [*Aside.*

Chri. Your silence is a confession of your guilt.

Val. I own it. [*Aside.*

Chri. But that will not serve my turn; for straight you must go clear yourself and me to him you have injured in me; if he has not made too much haste from me to be found again. You must, I say; for he is a man that will have satisfaction; and in satisfying him, you do me.

Val. Then he is satisfied.

Chri. How! is it you? then I am not satisfied.

Val. Will you be worse than your word?

Chri. I gave it not to you.

Val. Come, dear Christina, the jealous, like the drunkard, has his punishment with his offence.

Enter VINCENT.

Vin. Valentine! Mr. Valentine!

Val. Vincent!—

Vin. Where have you been all this while?

[VALENTINE *holds* CHRISTINA *by the hand, who seems to struggle to get from him.*

Val. Here with my injured Christina.

Vin. She's behind with Ranger, who is forced to speak all the tender things himself; for she affords him not a word.

Val. Pish! pish! Vincent; who is blind now? who deceived now?

Vin. You are; for I'm sure Christina is with him. Come back and see.

[*They go out at one door, and return at the other.*

Re-enter LYDIA *and* LEONORE, *followed by* RANGER.

Ran. [*To* LYDIA.] Still mocked! still abused! did you not bid me follow you where we might not be disturbed or overheard?—and now not allow me a word!

Vin. Did you hear him? [*Apart to* VALENTINE.

Val. Yes, yes, peace. [*Apart to* VINCENT.

Ran. Disowning your letter and me at Mr. Vincent's lodging, declaring you came to meet another there, and not me, with a great deal of such affronting unkindness, might be reasonable enough, because you would not entrust Vincent with our love; but now, when nobody sees us nor hears us, why this unseasonable shyness?

Lyd. It seems she did not expect him there, but had appointed to meet another:—I wish it were so. [*Aside.*

Ran. I have not patience!—do you design thus to revenge my intrusion into your lodging last night? sure if you had then been displeased with my company, you would not have invited yourself to't again by a letter? or is this a punishment for bringing you to a house so near your own, where, it seems, you were known too? I do confess it was a fault; but make me suffer any penance but your silence, because it is the certain mark of a mistress's lasting displeasure.

Lyd. My — is not yet come. [*Aside.*

Ran. Not yet a word! you did not use me so unkindly last night, when you chid me out of your house, and with indignation bid me begone. Now, you bid me follow you, and yet will have nothing to say to me; and I am more deceived this day and night than I was last night;—when, I must confess, I followed you for another—

Lyd. I'm glad to hear that. [*Aside.*

Ran. One that would have used me better; whose love I have ungratefully abused for yours; yet from no other reason but my natural inconstancy.—[*Aside.*] Poor Lydia! Lydia!

Lyd. He muttered my name sure, and with a sigh. [*Aside.*

Ran. But as last night by following (as I thought) her, I found you, so this night, by following you in vain, I do resolve, if I can find her again, to keep her for ever.

Lyd. Now I am obliged, and brought into debt, by his inconstancy:—faith, now cannot I hold out any longer; I must discover myself. [*Aside.*

Ran. But, madam, because I intend to see you no more, I'll take my leave of you for good and all; since you will not speak, I'll try if you will squeak. [*Goes to throw her down, she squeaks.*

Lyd. Mr. Ranger! Mr. Ranger!

Vin. Fy! Fy! you need not ravish Christina sure, that loves you so.

Ran. Is it she! Lydia all this while!—how am I gulled! and Vincent in the plot too! [*Aside.*

Lyd. Now, false Ranger!

Ran. Now, false Christina too!—you thought I did not know you now, because I offered you such an unusual civility.

Lyd. You knew me!—I warrant you knew, too, that I was the Christina you followed out of the Park last night! that I was the Christina that writ the letter too!

Ran. Certainly, therefore I would have taken my revenge, you see, for your tricks.

Val. Is not this the same woman that took refuge in your house last night, madam? [*To* CHRISTINA.

Chri. The very same.

Val. What, Mr. Ranger, we have chopped, and changed, and hid our Christinas so long and often, that at last we have drawn each of us our own!

Ran. Mr. Valentine in England!—the truth on't is, you have juggled together, and drawn without my knowledge; but since she will have it so, she shall swear me for good and all now. [*Goes to take her by the hand.*

Lyd. Come not near me.

Ran. Nay, you need not be afraid I would ravish you, now I know you.

Lyd. And yet, Leonore, I think 'tis but justice to pardon the fault I made him commit? [*Apart to* LEONORE, RANGER *listens.*

Ran. You consider it right, cousin; for indeed you are but merciful to yourself in it.

Lyd. Yet, if I would be rigorous, though I made a blot, your oversight has lost the game.

Ran. But 'twas rash woman's play, cousin, and ought not to be played again, let me tell you.

Enter DAPPERWIT.

Dap. Who's there? who's there?

Ran. Dapperwit.

Dap. Mr. Ranger, I am glad I have met with you, for I have left my bride just now in the house at Mulberry-garden, to come and pick up some of my friends in the Park here to sup with us.

Ran. Your bride! are you married then? where is you bride?

Dap. Here at Mulberry-garden, I say, where you, these ladies and gentlemen, shall all be welcome, if you will afford me the honour of your company.

Ran. With all our hearts:—but who have you married? Lucy?

Dap. What! do you think I would marry a wench? I have married an heiress worth thirty thousand pounds, let me perish!

Vin. An heiress worth thirty thousand pounds!

Dap. Mr. Vincent, your servant; you here too?

Ran. Nay, we are more of your acquaintance here, I think.—Go, we'll follow you, for if you have not dismissed your parson, perhaps we may make him more work. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—*The Dining-room in Mulberry-garden House.*

Enter SIR SIMON ADDLEPLOT, GRIPE, *Lady* FLIPPANT, MRS. MARTHA, JOYNER, MRS. CROSSBITE, *and* LUCY.

Sir Sim. 'Tis as I told you, ,ir, you see.

Gripe. Oh, graceless babe! married to a wit! an idle, loitering, slandering, foul-mouthed, beggarly wit! Oh, that my child should ever live to marry a wit!

Joyn. Indeed, your worship had better seen her fairly buried, as they say.

Cros. If my daughter there should have done so, I would not have given her a groat.

Gripe. Marry a wit!

Sir Sim. Mrs. Joyner, do not let me lose the widow too:—for if you do, (betwixt friends,) I and my small annuity are both blown up: it will follow my estate. [*Aside to* JOYNER.

Joyn. I warrant you. [*Aside.*

Flip. Let us make sure of sir Simon to-night, or— [*Aside to* JOYNER.

Joyn. You need not fear it.—[*Aside.*] Like the lawyers, while my clients endeavour to cheat one another, I in justice cheat 'em both.

Gripe. Marry a wit!

Enter DAPPERWIT, RANGER, LYDIA, VALENTINE, CHRISTINA, *and* VINCENT. DAPPERWIT *stops them, and they stand all behind.*

Dap. What, is he here! Lucy and her mother! [*Aside.*

Gripe. Tell me how thou camest to marry a wit.

Mar. Pray be not angry, sir, and I'll give you a good reason.

Gripe. Reason for marrying a wit!

Mar. Indeed, I found myself six months gone with child, and saw no hopes of your getting me a husband, or else I had not married a wit, sir.

Joyn. Then you were the wit.

Gripe. Had you that reason? nay, then—— [*Holding up his hands.*

Dap. How's that! [*Aside.*

Ran. Who would have thought, Dapperwit, you would have married a wench?

Dap. [*To* RANGER.]—Well, thirty thousand pounds will make me amends; I have known my betters wink, and fall on for five or six.—[*To* GRIPE *and the rest.*] What! you are come, sir, to give me joy? you Mrs. Lucy, you and you? well, unbid guests are doubly welcome.—Sir Simon, I made bold to invite these ladies and gentlemen.—For you must know, Mr. Ranger, this worthy sir Simon does not only give me my wedding supper, but my mistress too; and is, as it were, my father.

Sir Sim. Then I am, as it were, a grandfather to your new wife's *Hans en kelder;* to which you are but, as it were, a father! there's for you again, sir — ha, ha! —

Ran. Ha! ha! ha!— [*To* VINCENT.

Dap. Fools sometimes say unhappy things, if

we would mind 'em; but—what! melancholy at your daughter's wedding, sir?

Gripe. How deplorable is my condition!

Dap. Nay, if you will rob me of my wench, sir, can you blame me for robbing you of your daughter? I cannot be without a woman.

Gripe. My daughter, my reputation, and my money gone!—but the last is dearest to me. Yet at once I may retrieve that, and be revenged for the loss of the other; and all this by marrying Lucy here: I shall get my five hundred pounds again, and get heirs to exclude my daughter and frustrate Dapperwit; besides, 'tis agreed on all hands, 'tis cheaper keeping a wife than a wench. [*Aside.*

Dap. If you are so melancholy, sir, we will have the fiddles and a dance to divert you; come!

A Dance.

Gripe. Indeed, you have put me so upon a merry pin, that I resolve to marry too.

Flip. Nay, if my brother come to marrying once, I may too; I swore I would, when he did, little thinking —

Sir Sim. I take you at your word, madam.

Flip. Well, but if I had thought you would have been so quick with me —

Gripe. Where is your parson?

Dap. What! you would not revenge yourself upon the parson?

Gripe. No, I would have the parson revenge me upon you; he should marry me.

Dap. I am glad you are so frolic, sir; but who would you marry?

Gripe. That innocent lady? [*Pointing to* LUCY.

Dap. That innocent lady.

Gripe. Nay, I am impatient, Mrs. Joyner; pray fetch him up if he be yet in the house.

Dap. We were not married here:—but you cannot be in earnest.

Gripe. You'll find it so; since you have robbed me of my housekeeper, I must get another.

Dap. Why, she was my wench!

Gripe. I'll make her honest then.

Cros. Upon my repute he never saw her before:—but will your worship marry my daughter then?

Gripe. I promise her and you, before all this good company, to-morrow I will make her my wife.

Dap. How!

Ran. Our ladies, sir, I suppose, expect the same promise from us. [*To* VALENTINE.

Val. They may be sure of us without a promise; but let us (if we can) obtain theirs, to be sure of them.

Dap. But will you marry her to-morrow?— [*To* GRIPE.

Gripe. I will, verily.

Dap. I am undone then! ruined, let me perish!

Sir Sim. No, you may hire a little room in Covent Garden, and set up a coffee-house:—you and your wife will be sure of the wits' custom.

Dap. Abused by him I have abused!—
Fortune our foe we cannot overwit;
By none but thee our projects are cross-bit.

Val. Come, dear madam, what, yet angry?—jealousy sure is much more pardonable before marriage than after it; but to-morrow, by the help of the parson, you'll put me out of all my fears.

Chri. I am afraid then you would give me my revenge, and make me jealous of you; and I had rather suspect your faith than you should mine.

Ran. Cousin Lydia, I had rather suspect your faith too, than you should mine; therefore let us e'en marry to-morrow, that I may have my turn of watching, dogging, standing under the window, at the door, behind the hanging, or—

Lyd. But if I could be desperate now and give you up my liberty, could you find in your heart to quit all other engagements, and voluntarily turn yourself over to one woman, and she a wife too? could you away with the insupportable bondage of matrimony?

Ran. You talk of matrimony as irreverently as my lady Flippant: the bondage of matrimony! no—
The end of marriage now is liberty,
And two are bound—to set each other free.

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY DAPPERWIT.

Now, my brisk brothers of the pit, you'll say
I'm come to speak a good word for the play;
But gallants, let me perish! if I do,
For I have wit and judgment, just like you;
Wit never partial, judgment free and bold,
For fear or friendship never bought or sold,
Nor by good-nature e'er to be cajoled.
Good-nature in a critic were a crime,
Like mercy in a judge, and renders him
Guilty of all those faults he does forgive.
Besides, if thief from gallows you reprieve,
He'll cut your throat; so poet saved from shame,
In damn'd lampoon will murder your good name.
Yet in true spite to him and to his play,
Good faith, you should not rail at them to-day;
But to be more his foe, seem most his friend,
And so maliciously the play commend;
That he may be betray'd to writing on,
And poet let him be,—to be undone.

THE GENTLEMAN DANCING-MASTER.

A Comedy.

——————Non satis est risu diducere rictum
Auditoris: et est quædam tamen hic quoque virtus.—HORAT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MR. GERRARD, } *Young Gentlemen of the Town, and*
MR. MARTIN, } *Friends.*
MR. PARIS, *or* MONSIEUR DE PARIS, *a vain Coxcomb, and rich City Heir, newly returned from France, and mightily affected with the French Language and Fashions.*
MR. JAMES FORMAL, *or* DON DIEGO, *an old rich Spanish Merchant, newly returned home, as much affected with the Habit and Customs of Spain, and Uncle to* PARIS.
A little Blackamoor, *Lackey to* FORMAL.
A Parson.
A French Scullion.

MRS. HIPPOLITA, FORMAL's *Daughter.*
MRS. CAUTION, FORMAL's *Sister, an impertinent preçise old Woman.*
PRUE, HIPPOLITA's *Maid.*
A Lady.
MRS. FLIRT, } *Two common Women of the Town.*
MRS. FLOUNCE, }
Servants, Waiter, *and* Attendants.

SCENE,—LONDON.

PROLOGUE TO THE CITY.

NEWLY AFTER THE REMOVAL OF THE DUKE'S COMPANY FROM LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS TO THEIR NEW THEATRE NEAR SALISBURY-COURT.

OUR author (like us) finding 'twould scarce do
At t'other end o'th' town, is come to you;
And, since 'tis his last trial, has that wit
To throw himself on a substantial pit;
Where needy wit or critic dare not come,
Lest neighbour i' the cloak, with looks so grum,
Should prove a dun;
Where punk in vizor dare not rant and tear
To put us out, since Bridewell is so near:
In short, we shall be heard, be understood,
If not, shall be admired, and that's as good.
For you to senseless plays have still been kind,
Nay, where no sense was, you a jest would find:
And never was it heard of, that the city
Did ever take occasion to be witty
Upon dull poet, or stiff player's action,
But still with claps opposed the hissing faction.
But if you hiss'd, 'twas at the pit, not stage;
So, with the poet, damn'd the damning age,
And still, we know, are ready to engage
Against the flouting, ticking gentry, who
Citizen, player, poet, would undo:—
The poet! no, unless by commendation,
For on the 'Change wits have no reputation:
And rather than be branded for a wit,
He with you able men would credit get.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—DON DIEGO's *House, in the Evening.*

Enter HIPPOLITA *and* PRUE.

Hip. To confine a woman just in her rambling age! take away her liberty at the very time she should use it! O barbarous aunt! O unnatural father! to shut up a poor girl at fourteen, and hinder her budding! All things are ripened by the sun:—to shut up a poor girl at fourteen!—

Prue. 'Tis true, miss, two poor young creatures as we are!

Hip. Not suffered to see a play in a twelvemonth!—

Prue. Nor go to Punchinello, nor Paradise!—

Hip. Nor to take a ramble to the Park nor Mulberry-garden!—

Prue. Nor to Totnam-court, nor Islington!—

Hip. Nor to eat a syllabub in New Spring-garden with a cousin!—

Prue. Nor to drink a pint of wine with a friend at the Prince in the Sun!—

Hip. Nor to hear a fiddle in good company!—

Prue. Nor to hear the organs and tongs at the Gun in Moorfields!—

Hip. Nay, not suffered to go to church, because the men are sometimes there!—Little did I think I should ever have longed to go to church.

Prue. Or I either;—but between two maids—

Hip. Nor see a man!—

Prue. Nor come near a man!—

Hip. Nor hear of a man!—

Prue. No, miss; but to be denied a man! and to have no use at all of a man! —

Hip. Hold, hold!—your resentment is as much greater than mine, as your experience has been greater. But all this while, what do we make of my cousin, my husband elect, as my aunt says? We have had his company these three days; is he no man?

Prue. No, faith, he's but a monsieur. But you'll resolve yourself that question within these three days; for by that time he'll be your husband, if your father come to-night—

Hip. Or if I provide not myself with another in the mean time: for fathers seldom choose well; and I will no more take my father's choice in a husband, than I would in a gown, or a suit of knots. So that if that cousin of mine were not an ill-contrived, ugly, freakish fool, in being my father's choice I should hate him. Besides, he has almost made me out of love with mirth and good-humour; for he debases it as much as a jack-pudding, and civility and good breeding more than a city dancing master.

Prue. What! won't you marry him then, madam?

Hip. Would'st thou have me marry a fool, an idiot?

Prue. Lord! 'tis a sign you have been kept up indeed, and know little of the world, to refuse a man for a husband only because he's a fool! Methinks he's a pretty apish kind of a gentleman, like other gentlemen, and handsome enough to lie with in the dark, when husbands take their privileges; and for the day-times, you may take the privilege of a wife.

Hip. Excellent governess! you do understand the world, I see.

Prue. Then you should be guided by me.

Hip. Art thou in earnest then, damned jade?—would'st thou have me marry him?—Well, there are more poor young women undone, and married to filthy fellows by the treachery and evil counsel of chambermaids, than by the obstinacy and covetousness of parents.

Prue. Does not your father come on purpose out of Spain to marry you to him? Can you release yourself from your aunt or father any other way? Have you a mind to be shut up as long as you live? For my part, though you can hold out upon the lime from the walls here, salt, old shoes, and oatmeal, I cannot live so: I must confess my patience is worn out.

Hip. Alas, alas, poor Prue! your stomach lies another way: I will take pity of you, and get me a husband very suddenly, who may have a servant at your service. But rather than marry my cousin, I will be a nun in the new protestant nunnery they talk of; where, they say, there will be no hopes of coming near a man.

Prue. But you can marry nobody but your cousin, miss: your father you expect to-night; and be certain his Spanish policy and wariness, which has kept you up so close ever since you came from Hackney school, will make sure of you within a day or two at farthest.

Hip. Then 'tis time to think how to prevent him—stay—

Prue. In vain, vain, miss!

Hip. If we knew but any man, any man, though he were but a little handsomer than the devil, so that he were a gentleman!

Prue. What if you did know any man? if you had an opportunity, could you have confidence to speak to a man first? but if you could, how could you come to him, or he to you? nay, how could you send to him? for though you could write, which your father in his Spanish prudence would never permit you to learn, who should carry the letter?—But we need not be concerned for that, since we know not to whom to send it.

Hip. Stay — it must be so — I'll try however —

Enter MONSIEUR DE PARIS.

Mons. Serviteur! serviteur! la cousine; I come to give the bon soir, as the French say.

Hip. O, cousin! you know him; the fine gentleman they talk of so much in town.

Prue. What! will you talk to him of any man else?

Mons. I know all the beau monde, cousine.

Hip. Master —

Mons. Monsieur Taileur, Monsieur Esmit, Monsieur —

Hip. These are Frenchmen—

Mons. Non, non; voud you have me say Mr. Taylor, Mr. Smith? Fi! fi! teste non!—

Hip. But don't you know the brave gentleman they talk of so much in town?

Mons. Who? Monsieur Gerrard?

Hip. What kind of man is that Mr. Gerrard? and then I'll tell you.

Mons. Why—he is truly a pretty man, a pretty man—a pretty so so—kind of man, for an Englishman.

Hip. How a pretty man?

Mons. Why, he is conveniently tall—but—

Hip. But what?

Mons. And not ill-shaped—but—

Hip. But what?

Mons. And handsome, as 'tis thought, but—

Hip. But! what are your exceptions to him?

Mons. I can't tell you, because they are innumerable, innumerable, mon foy!

Hip. Has he wit?

Mons. Ay, ay, they say, he's witty, brave, and de bel humeur, and well-bred, with all that—but—

Hip. But what? does he want judgment?

Mons. Non, non: they say he has good sense and judgment; but it is according to the account Englis—for—

Hip. For what?

Mons. For, jarnie! if I think it.

Hip. Why?

Mons. Why?—why his tailor lives within Ludgate — his valet de chambre is no Frenchman — and he has been seen at noon-day to go into an English eating-house —

the battle of wit & cunning, is on

Hip. Say you so, cousin!

Mons. Then for being well-bred, you shall judge:—First, he can't dance a step, nor sing a French song, nor swear a French oate, nor use the polite French word in his conversation; and in fine, can't play at hombre — but speaks base good Englis, with the commune home-bred pronunciation; and in fine, to say no more, he never carries a snuff-box about with him.

Hip. Indeed!

Mons. And yet this man has been abroad as much as any man, and does not make the least show of it, but a little in his mien, not at all in his discour, jarnie! He never talks so much as of St. Peter's church at Rome, the Escurial, or Madrid; nay, not so much as of Henry IV., of Pont-neuf, Paris, and the new Louvre, nor of the Grand Roy.

Hip. 'Tis for his commendation, if he does not talk of his travels.

Mons. Auh! auh!—cousine—he is conscious to himself of his wants, because he is very envious; for he cannot endure me.

Hip. [*Aside.*] He shall be my man then for that.—Ay, ay! 'tis the same, Prue.—[*Aloud.*] No, I know he can't endure you, cousin.

Mons. How do you know it — who never stir out? teste non!

Hip. Well—dear cousin,—if you will promise me never to tell my aunt, I'll tell you.

Mons. I won't, I won't, jarnie!

Hip. Nor to be concerned yourself, so as to make a quarrel of it.

Mons. Non, non—

Hip. Upon the word of a gentleman?

Mons. Foy de chevalier, I will not quarrel.

Prue. Lord, miss! I wonder you won't believe him without more ado.

Hip. Then he has the hatred of a rival for you.

Mons. Mal a peste!

Hip. You know my chamber is backward, and has a door into the gallery which looks into the back yard of a tavern, whence Mr. Gerrard once spying me at the window, has often since attempted to come in at that window by the help of the leads of a low building adjoining; and, indeed, 'twas as much as my maid and I could do to keep him out.

Mons. Au, le coquin!—

Hip. But nothing is stronger than aversion; for I hate him perfectly, even as much as I love you—

Prue. I believe so, faith!—but what design have we now on foot? [*Aside.*

Hip. This discovery is an argument, sure, of my love to you.

Mons. Ay, ay, say no more, cousin, I doubt not your amour for me, because I doubt not your judgment. But what's to be done with this fanfaron?—I know where he eats to-night—I'll go find him out, ventre bleu!—

Hip. O, my dear cousin, you will not make a quarrel of it? I thought what your promise would come to!

Mons. You'd have a man of honour—

Hip. Keep his promise.

Mons. And lose his mistress?—That were not for my honour, ma foy!

Hip. Cousin, though you do me the injury to think I could be false, do not do yourself the injury to think any one could be false to you. Will you be afraid of losing your mistress? To show such a fear to your rival, were for his honour, and not for yours, sure.

Mons. Nay, cousin, I'd have you know I was never afraid of losing my mistress in earnest.—Let me see the man can get my mistress from me, jarnie!—But he that loves must seem a little jealous.

Hip. Not to his rival: those that have jealousy hide it from their rivals.

Mons. But there are some who say, jealousy is no more to be hid than a cough:—but it should never be discovered in me, if I had it, because it is not French at all—ventre bleu!

Hip. No, you should rally your rival, and rather make a jest of your quarrel to him; and that, I suppose, is French too.

Mons. 'Tis so, 'tis so, cousine; 'tis the veritable French method; for your Englis, for want of wit, drive every thing to a serious grum quarrel, and then would make a jest on't, when 'tis too late, when they can't laugh, jarnie!

Hip. Yes, yes, I would have you rally him soundly: do not spare him a jot.—But shall you see him to-night?

Mons. Ay, ay.

Hip. Yes; pray be sure to see him for the jest's sake.

Mons. I will—for I love a jest as well as any bel esprit of 'em all—da!

Hip. Ay, and rally him soundly; be sure you rally him soundly, and tell him just thus:—that the lady he has so long courted, from the great window of the Ship tavern, is to be your wife to-morrow, unless he come at his wonted hour of six in the morning to her window to forbid the bans; for 'tis the first and last time of asking; and if he come not, let him for ever hereafter stay away, and hold his tongue.

Mons. Ha! ha! ha! a very good jest, teste bleu!

Hip. And if the fool should come again, I would tell him his own, I warrant you, cousin. My gentleman should be satisfied for good and all, I'd secure him.

Mons. Bon, bon.

Prue. Well, well, young mistress; you were not at Hackney school for nothing, I see; nor taken away for nothing.—A woman may soon be too old, but is never too young to shift for herself. [*Aside.*

Mons. Ha! ha! ha! cousine, dou art a merry grig, ma foy!—I long to be with Gerrard; and I am the best at improving a jest—I shall have such divertisement to-night, teste bleu!

Hip. He'll deny, may be, at first, that he ever courted any such lady.

Mons. Nay, I am sure he'll be ashamed of it, I shall make him look so sillily, teste non!—I long to find him out.—Adieu, adieu, la cousine.

Hip. Shall you be sure to find him?

Mons. Indubitablement, I'll search the town over, but I'll find him: ha! ha! ha!—[*Exit* MONSIEUR, *and returns.*]—But I'm afraid, cousine, if I should tell him you are to be my wife to-morrow, he would not come: now, I am for having him come for the jest's sake, ventre!—

Hip. So am I, cousin, for having him come too, for the jest's sake.

Mons. Well, well, leave it to me:—ha! ha! ha!

Enter MRS. CAUTION.

Mrs. Caut. What's all this giggling here?

Mons. Hey! do you tinke we'll tell you? no, fait, I warrant you, teste non!—ha! ha! ha!—

Hip. My cousin is overjoyed, I suppose, that my father is to come to-night.

Mrs. Caut. I am afraid he will not come to-night:—but you'll stay and see, nephew?

Mons. Non, non: I am to sup at t'other end of the town to-night—La, la, la—Ra, ra, ra— [*Exit singing.*

Mrs. Caut. I wish the French levity of this young man may agree with your father's Spanish gravity.

Hip. Just as your crabbed old age and my youth agree.

Mrs. Caut. Well, malapert, I know you hate me, because I have been the guardian of your reputation: but your husband may thank me one day.

Hip. If he be not a fool, he would rather be obliged to me for my virtue than to you, since, at long run, he must, whether he will or no.

Mrs. Caut. So, so!

Hip. Nay, now I think on't, I'd have you to know, the poor man, whosoe'er he is, will have little cause to thank you.

Mrs. Caut. No!—

Hip. No; for I never lived so wicked a life as I have done this twelvemonth, since I have not seen a man.

Mrs. Caut. How, how! if you have not seen a man, how could you be wicked? how could you do any ill?

Hip. No, I have done no ill; but I have paid it with thinking.

Mrs. Caut. O that's no hurt! to think, is no hurt:—the ancient, grave, and godly, cannot help thoughts.

Hip. I warrant, you have had 'em yourself, aunt?

Mrs. Caut. Yes, yes, when I cannot sleep.

Hip. Ha! ha!—I believe it. But know, I have had those thoughts sleeping and waking; for I have dreamt of a man.

Mrs. Caut. No matter, no matter, so that it was but a dream: I have dreamt myself. For you must know, widows are mightily given to dream; insomuch that a dream is waggishly called *the Widow's Comfort.*

Hip. But I did not only dream in— [*Sighs.*

Mrs. Caut. How, how! did you more than dream? speak, young harlotry! confess; did you more than dream? How could you do more than dream in this house? speak, confess!

Hip. Well, I will then. Indeed, aunt, I did not only dream, but I was pleased with my dream when I awaked.

Mrs. Caut. Oh, is that all?—Nay, if a dream only will please you, you are a modest young woman still: but have a care of a vision.

Hip. Ay; but to be delighted when we wake with a naughty dream, is a sin, aunt; and I am so very scrupulous, that I would as soon consent to a naughty man as to a naughty dream.

Mrs. Caut. I do believe you.

Hip. I am for going into the throng of temptations.

Mrs. Caut. There I believe you again.

Hip. And making myself so familiar with them, that I would not be concerned for 'em a whit.

Mrs. Caut. There I do not believe you.

Hip. And would take all the innocent liberty of the town:—to tattle to your men under a vizard in the playhouses, and meet 'em at night in masquerade.

Mrs. Caut. There I do believe you again; I know you would be masquerading: but worse would come on't, as it has done to others who have been in a masquerade, and are now virgins but in masquerade, and will not be their own women again as long as they live. The children of this age must be wise children indeed if they know their fathers, since their mothers themselves cannot inform 'em! O, the fatal liberty of this masquerading age! when I was a young woman—

Hip. Come, come, do not blaspheme this masquerading age, like an ill-bred city-dame, whose husband is half broke by living in Covent-garden, or who has been turned out of the Temple or Lincoln's-Inn upon a masquerading night. By what I've heard, 'tis a pleasant, well-bred, complaisant, free, frolic, good-natured, pretty age: and if you do not like it, leave it to us that do.

Mrs. Caut. Lord, how impudently you talk, niece! I'm sure I remember when I was a maid—

Hip. Can you remember it, reverend aunt?

Mrs. Caut. Yes, modest niece,—that a raw young thing, though almost at woman's estate, (that was then at thirty or thirty-five years of age,) would not so much as have looked upon a man—

Hip. Above her father's butler or coachman.

Mrs. Caut. Still taking me up! Well, thou art a mad girl; and so good night. We may go to bed; for I suppose now your father will not come to-night. [*Exit.*

Hip. I'm sorry for it; for I long to see him.—[*Aside.*] But I lie: I had rather see Gerrard here; and yet I know not how I shall like him. If he has wit, he will come; and if he has none, he would not be welcome. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The French-House.—A Table, Bottles, and Candles.*

Enter MR. GERRARD, MARTIN, *and* MONSIEUR DE PARIS.

Mons. 'Tis ver veritable, jarnie! what the French say of you Englis: you use the debauch so much, it cannot have with you the French operation; you are never enjoyee. But come, let us for once be enfinement galliard, and sing a French sonnet.

[*Sings,*—La boutelle, la boutelle, glou, glou

Mar. [*To* GERRARD.] What a melodious fop it is!

Mons. Auh! you have no complaisance.

Ger. No, we can't sing; but we'll drink to you the lady's health, whom (you say) I have so long courted at her window.

Mons. Ay, there is your complaisance: all your Englis complaisance is pledging complaisance, ventre!—But if I do you reason here, [*takes the glass.*]—will you do me reason to a little French chanson à boire I shall begin to you?—*La boutelle, la boutelle, la*— [*Sings*

Mar. [*To* GERRARD.] I had rather keep company with a set of wide-mouthed, drunken cathedral choristers.

Ger. Come, sir, drink; and he shall do you reason to your French song, since you stand upon't. —Sing him *Arthur of Bradley*, or, *I am the Duke of Norfolk*.

Mons. Auh, teste bleu!—an Englis catch! fy! fy! ventre!—

Ger. He can sing no damned French song.

Mons. Nor can I drink the damned Englis wine. [*Sets down the glass.*

Ger. Yes, to that lady's health, who has commanded me to wait upon her to-morrow at her window, which looks (you say) into the inward yard of the Ship tavern, near the end of what-d'ye-call't street.

Mons. Ay, ay; do you not know her? not you! vert bleu!

Ger. But, pray repeat again what she said.

Mons. Why, she said she is to be married to-morrow to a person of honour, a brave gentleman, that shall be nameless, and so, and so forth.— —[*Aside.*] Little does he think who 'tis!

Ger. And what else?

Mons. That if you make not your appearance before her window to-morrow at your wonted hour of six in the morning, to forbid the banns, you must for ever hereafter stay away and hold your tongue; for 'tis the first and last time of asking.—Ha! ha! ha!

Ger. 'Tis all a riddle to me: I should be unwilling to be fooled by this coxcomb. [*Aside.*

Mons. I won't tell him all she said, lest he should not go: I would fain have him go for the jest's sake—Ha! ha! ha! [*Aside.*

Ger. Her name is, you say, Hippolita, daughter to a rich Spanish merchant.

Mons. Ay, ay, you don't know her, not you! à d'autre, à d'autre, ma foy!—ha! ha! ha!

Ger. Well, I will be an easy fool for once.

Mar. By all means go.

Mons. Ay, ay, by all means go—ha! ha! ha!

Ger. [*Aside.*] To be caught in a fool's trap—I'll venture it.—[*Drinks to him.*] Come, 'tis her health.

Mons. And to your good reception—teste bleu! —ha! ha! ha!

Ger. Well, Monsieur, I'll say this for thee, thou hast made the best use of three months at Paris as ever English 'squire did.

Mons. Considering I was in a dam Englis pension too.

Mar. Yet you have conversed with some French, I see; footmen, I suppose, at the fencing-school? I judge it by your oaths.

Mons. French footmen! well, well, I had rather have the conversation of a French footman than of an Englis 'squire; there's for you, da—

Mar. I beg your pardon, Monsieur; I did not think the French footmen had been so much your friends.

Ger. Yes, yes, I warrant they have obliged him at Paris much more than any of their masters did. Well, there shall be no more said against the French footmen.

Mons. Non, de grace!—you are always turning the nation Francez into ridicule, dat nation so accomplie, dat nation which you imitate so, dat in the conclusion, you butte turn yourself into ridicule, ma foy! If you are for de raillery, abuse the Dutch, why not abuse the Dutch? les grosses villains, pendards, insolents; but here in your England, ma foy! you have more honeur, respecte, and estimation for the Dushe swabber, who come to cheat your nation, den for de Franch footman, who come to oblige your nation.

Mar. Our nation! then you disown it for yours, it seems.

Mons. Well! wat of dat? are you the disobligee by dat?

Ger. No, Monsieur, far from it; you could not oblige us, nor your country, any other way than by disowning it.

Mons. It is de brutal country, which abuse de France, and reverence de Dushe; I will maintain, sustain, and justifie, dat one little Franch footman have more honeur, courage, and generosity, more good blood in his vaines, an mush more good manners an civility den all de State-General together, jarnie!—Dey are only wise and valiant wen dey are drunkee.

Ger. That is, always.

Mons. But dey are never honest wen dey are drunkee; dey are de only rogue in de varlde who are not honeste when dey are drunk—ma foy!

Ger. I find you are well acquainted with them, Monsieur.

Mons. Ay, ay, I have made the toure of Holland, but it was en poste, dere was no staying for me, teste non!—for de gentleman can no more live dere den de toad in Ir'land, ma foy! for I did not see on chevalier in de whole countree: alway, you know, de rebel hate de gens de quality. Besides, I had make sufficient observation of the canaille barbare de first nightee of my arrival at Amsterdamme: I did visit, you must know, one of de principal of de State-General, to whom I had recommendation from England, and did find his excellence weighing soap, jarnie!—ha! ha! ha!

Ger. Weighing soap!

Mons. Weighing soap, ma foy! for he was a wholesale chandeleer; and his lady was taking de tale of chandels wid her own witer hands, ma foy! and de young lady, his excellence daughter, stringing harring, stringing harring, jarnie!—

Ger. So!—and what were his sons doing?

Mons. Augh—his son (for he had but one) was making the tour of France, Espagne, Italy, and Germany, in a coach and six; or rader, now I tink on't, gone of an embassy hider to dere master Cromwell, whom they did love and fear, because he was someting de greater rebel. Bute now I talk of de rebelle, none but de rebel can love de rebelle. And so much for you and your friend the Dushe; I'll say no more, and pray do you say no more of my friend de Franch, not so mush as of my friend de Franch footman—da—

Ger. No, no;—but, Monsieur, now give me leave to admire thee, that in three months at Paris you could renounce your language, drinking, and your country, (for which we are not angry with you,) as I said, and come home so perfect a Frenchman, that the draymen of your father's own brewhouse would be ready to knock thee on the head.

Mons. Vel, vel, my father was a merchant of his own beer, as the noblesse of Franch of their own wine.—But I can forgive you that raillery, that bob, since you say I have the eyre Francez: —but have I the eyre Francez?

Ger. As much as any French footman of 'em all.

Mons. And do I speak agreeable ill Englis enough?

Ger. Very ill.

Mons. Veritablement?

Ger. Veritablement.

Mons. For you must know, 'tis as ill breeding now to speak good Englis as to write good Englis, good sense, or a good hand.

Ger. But, indeed, methinks you are not slovenly enough for a Frenchman.

Mons. Slovenly! you mean negligent?

Ger. No, I mean slovenly.

Mons. Then I will be more slovenly.

Ger. You know, to be a perfect Frenchman, you must never be silent, never sit still, and never be clean.

Mar. But you have forgot one main qualification of a true Frenchman, he should never be sound, that is, be very pocky too.

Mons. Oh! if dat be all, I am very pocky; pocky enough, jarnie! that is the only French qualification may be had without going to Paris, mon foy!

Enter Waiter.

Wait. Here are a couple of ladies coming up to you, sir.

Ger. To us!—did you appoint any to come hither, Martin?

Mar. Not I.

Ger. Nor you, Monsieur?

Mons. Nor I.

Ger. Sirrah, tell your master, if he cannot protect us from the constable, and these midnight coursers, 'tis not a house for us.

Mar. Tell 'em you have nobody in the house, and shut the doors.

Wait. They'll not be satisfied with that, they'll break open the door. They searched last night all over the house for my lord Fisk, and sir Jeffery Jantee, who were fain to hide themselves in the bar under my mistress's chair and petticoats.

Mons. Wat, do the women hunt out the men so now?

Mar. Ay, ay, things are altered since you went to Paris; there's hardly a young man in town dares be known of his lodging for 'em.

Ger. Bailiffs, pursuivants, or a city constable, are modest people in comparison of them.

Mar. And we are not so much afraid to be taken up by the watch as by the tearing midnight ramblers, or huzza women.

Mons. Jarnie!—ha! ha! ha!

Ger. Where are they? I hope they are gone again.

Wait. No, sir, they are below at the stair-foot, only swearing at their coachman.

Ger. Come, you rogue, they are in fee with you waiters, and no gentleman can come hither, but they have the intelligence straight.

Wait. Intelligence from us, sir! they should never come here, if we could help it. I am sure we wish 'em choked when we see them come in; for they bring such good stomachs from St. James's Park, or rambling about in the streets, that we poor waiters have not a bit left; 'tis well if we can keep our money in our pockets for 'em. I am sure I have paid seventeen and sixpence in half-crowns for coach-hire at several times for a little damned tearing lady, and when I asked her for it again one morning in her chamber, she bid me pay myself, for she had no money; but I wanted the courage of a gentleman; besides, the lord that kept her was a good customer to our house and my friend, and I made a conscience of wronging him.

Ger. A man of honour!

Mons. Vert and bleu! pleasent, pleasent, ma foy!

Ger. Go, go, sirrah, shut the door, I hear 'em coming up.

Wait. Indeed I dare not; they'll kick me down stairs, if I should.

Ger. Go, you rascal, I say.

[*The* Waiter *shuts the Door, 'tis thrust open again.*

Enter Flounce *and* Flirt *in Vizards, striking the* Waiter, *and come up to the table.*

Ger. [*Aside.*] Flounce and Flirt, upon my life! —[*Aloud.*] Ladies, I am sorry you have no volunteers in your service; this is mere pressing, and argues a great necessity you have for men.

Flou. You need not be afraid, sir; we will use no violence to you; you are not fit for our service: we know you.

Flirt. The hot service you have been in formerly makes you unfit for ours now; besides, you begin to be something too old for us; we are for the brisk huzzas of seventeen or eighteen.

Ger. Nay, faith, I am not too old yet; but an old acquaintance will make any man old:—besides, to tell you the truth, you are come a little too early for me, for I am not drunk yet. But there are your brisk young men, who are always drunk, and, perhaps, have the happiness not to know you.

Flou. The happiness not to know us!

Flirt. The happiness not to know us!

Ger. Be not angry, ladies; 'tis rather happiness to have pleasure to come than to have it past, and therefore these gentlemen are happy in not knowing you.

Mar. I'd have you to know, I do know the ladies too, and I will not lose the honour of the ladies' acquaintance for anything.

Flou. Not for the pleasure of beginning an acquaintance with us, as Mr. Gerrard says: but it is the general vanity of you town fops to lay claim to all good acquaintance and persons of honour; you cannot let a woman pass in the Mall at midnight, but, damn you, you know her straight, you know her;—but you would be damned before you would say so much for one in a mercer's shop.

Ger. He has spoken it in a French-house, where he has very good credit, and I dare swear you may make him eat his words.

Mons. She does want a gown, indeed; she is in her dishabillee. This dishabillee is a great mode in England; the women love the dishabillee as well as the men, ma foy! [*Peeping under her scarf.*

Flirt. Well, if we should stay and sup with you, I warrant you would be bragging of it to-morrow amongst your comrades, that you had the company of two women of quality at the French-house, and name us.

Mar. Pleasant jilts! [*Aside.*

Ger. No, upon our honours, we would not brag of your company.

Flou. Upon your honours?

Mar. No, faith.

Flou. Come, we will venture to sit down then: yet I know the vanity of you men; you could not contain yourselves from bragging.

Ger. No, no; you women now-a-days have found out the pleasure of bragging, and will allow it the men no longer.

Mar. Therefore, indeed, we dare not stay

to sup with you; for you would be sure to tell on't.

Ger. And we are young men who stand upon our reputations.

Flou. You are very pleasant, gentlemen.

Mar. For my part I am to be married shortly, and know 'twould quickly come to my mistress's ear.

Ger. And for my part I must go visit to-morrow morning betimes a new city mistress; and you know they are as inquisitive as precise in the city.

Flirt. Come, come, pray leave this fooling; sit down again, and let us bespeak supper.

Ger. No, faith, I dare not.

Mar. Besides, we have supped.

Flou. No matter, we only desire you should look on while we eat, and put the glass about, or so.

[GERRARD *and* MARTIN *offer to go.*

Flirt. Pray, stay.

Ger. Upon my life I dare not.

Flou. Upon our honours we will not tell, if you are in earnest.

Ger. Pshaw! pshaw!—I know the vanity of you women; you could not contain yourselves from bragging.

Mons. Ma foy! is it certain? ha! ha! ha!—Hark you, madame, can't you fare well but you must cry roast-meat?

You spoil your trade by bragging of your gains;
The silent sow (madam) does eat most grains.—
da—

Flirt. Your servant, monsieur fop.

Flou. Nay, faith, do not go, we will no more tell—

Mons. Than you would of a clap, if you had it; dat's the only secret you can keep, jarnie!

Mar. I am glad we are rid of these jilts.

Ger. And we have taken a very ridiculous occasion.

Mons. Wat! must we leave the lady then? dis is dam civility Englis, ma foy!

Flirt. Nay, sir, you have too much of the French air, to have so little honour and good breeding.

[*Pulling him back.*

Mons. Dee you tinke so then, sweet madam, I have mush of de French eyre?

Flirt. More than any Frenchman breathing.

Mons. Auh, you are the curtoise dame; morbleu! I shall stay then, if you think so. Monsieur Gerrard, you will be certain to see the lady to-morrow? pray not forget, ha; ha! ha!

Ger. No, no, sir.

Mar. You will go then?

Ger. I will go on a fool's errand for once.

[*Exeunt* GERRARD *and* MARTIN.

Flou. What will you eat, sir?

Mons. Wat you please, madame.

Flou. D'ye hear, waiter? then some young partridge.

Wait. What else, madam!

Flirt. Some ruffs.

Wait. What else, madam?

Flirt. Some young pheasants.

Wait. What else, madam?

Flirt. Some young rabbits; I love rabbits.

Wait. What else, madam?

Flou. Stay—

Mons. Dis Englis waiter wit his *wat else, madam*, will ruin me, teste non! [*Aside.*

Wait. What else, madam?

Mons. Wat else, madam, agen!—call up the French waiter.

Wait. What else, madam?

Mons. Again!—call up the French waiter or quisinier, mon-teste! ventre! vite!—Auh, madam, the stupidity of the Englis waiter! I hate the Englis waiter, ma foy! [*Exit* Waiter.

Flirt. Be not in passion, dear monsieur.

Mons. I kiss your hand, obligeante madam.

Enter a French Scullion.

Chere Pierot, serviteur, serviteur.—[*Kisses the* Scullion.]—Orca à manger?

Scull. En voulez vous de cram schiquin?

Flou. Yes.

Scull. De partrish, de faysan, de quailles?

Mons. [*Aside.*] This bougre vil ruine me too; but he speak wit dat bel eyre and grace, I cannot bid him hold his tongue, ventre! C'est assez, Pierot, vat-en. [*Exit* Scullion, *and returns.*

Scull. And de litel plate de—

Mons. Jarnie! vat-en.

[*Exit* Scullion, *and returns.*

Scull. And de litel plate de—

Mons. De grace, go dy way.

[*Exit* Scullion, *and returns.*

Scull. And de litel de—

Mons. De fromage de Brie, vat-en!—go, go.

Flou. What's that? cheese that stinks?

Mons. Ay, ay, be sure it stinke extremente. Pierot, vat-en; but stay till I drink dy health:—here's to dat pretty fellow's health, madam.

Flirt. Must we drink the scullion's health?

Mons. Auh, you will not be disobligeante, madam; he is the quisinier for a king, nay, for a cardinal French abbot. [*Drinks. Exit* Scullion.

Flou. But how shall we divertise ourselves till supper be ready?

Flirt. Can we have better divertisement than this gentleman?

Flou. But I think we had better carry the gentleman home with us, and because it is already late, sup at home, and divertise the gentleman at cards, till it be ready.—D'ye hear, waiter? let it be brought, when 'tis ready, to my lodging hard by, in Mustard-alley, at the sign of the Crooked-billet.

Mons. At the Crooked-billet!

Flirt. Come, sir, come.

Mons. Morbleu! I have take the vow (since my last clap) never to go again to the bourdel.

Flou. What is the bourdel?

Mons. How call you the name of your house?

Flirt. The Crooked-billet.

Mons. No, no, the—bawdy-house, vert and bleu!

Flirt. How, our lodging! we'd have you to know—

Mons. Auh, morbleu! I would not know it; de Crooked-billet, ha! ha!

Flirt. Come, sir.

Mons. Besides, if I go wit you to the bourdel, you will tell, morbleu!

Flou. Fy! fy! come along.

Mons. Beside, I am to be married within these two days; if you should tell now—

Flirt. Come, come along, we will not tell.

Mons. But will you promise then to have the care of my honour? pray, good madam, have de care of my honour, pray have de care of my honour.

Will you have care of my honour? pray have de care of my honour, and do not tell if you can help it; pray, dear madam, do not tell. [*Kneels to 'em.*

Flirt. I would not tell for fear of losing you, my love, for you will make me secret.

Mons. Why, do you love me?

Flirt. Indeed I cannot help telling you now, what my modesty ought to conceal, but my eyes would disclose it too:—I have a passion for you, sir.

Mons. A passion for me!

Flirt. An extreme passion, dear sir; you are so French, so mightily French, so agreeable French—but I'll tell you more of my heart at home: come along.

Mons. But is your pation sincere?

Flirt. The truest in the world.

Mons. Well then, I'll venture my body wit thee for one night.

Flirt. For one night! don't you believe that: and so you would leave me to-morrow? but I love you so, I cannot part with you, you must keep me for good and all, if you will have me. I can't leave you for my heart.

Mons. How! keep, jarnie! de whore English have notinge but keepe, keepe in dere mouths now-a-days, teste non!—Formerly 'twas enoughe to keep de shild, ma foy!

Flirt. Nay, I will be kept, else—but, come, we'll talk on't at home.

Mons. Umh—so, so, ver vel; de amoure of de whore does alway end in keep, ha! keep, ma foy! keep, ha!—

The punk that entertains you wit her passion,
Is like kind host who makes the invitation,
At your own cost, to his fort bon collation.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—DON DIEGO'S *House, in the Morning.*

Enter DON DIEGO *in the Spanish Habit, and* MRS. CAUTION.

Don. Have you had a Spanish care of the honour of my family? that is to say, have you kept up my daughter close in my absence, as I directed?

Mrs. Caut. I have, sir, but it was as much as I could do.

Don. I knew that; for 'twas as much as I could do to keep up her mother;—I that have been in Spain, look you.

Mrs. Caut. Nay, 'tis a hard task to keep up an English woman.

Don. As hard as it is for those who are not kept up to be honest, look you, con licentia, sister.

Mrs. Caut. How now, brother! I am sure my husband never kept me up.

Don. I knew that, therefore I cried con licentia, sister, as the Spaniards have it.

Mrs. Caut. But you Spaniards are too censorious, brother.

Don. You English women, sister, give us too much cause, look you:—but you are sure my daughter has not seen a man since my departure?

Mrs. Caut. No, not so much as a churchman.

Don. As a churchman! voto! I thank you for that; not a churchman! not a churchman!

Mrs. Caut. No, not so much as a churchman; but of any, one would think one might trust a churchman.

Don. No, we are bold enough in trusting them with our souls, I'll never trust them with the body of my daughter, look you, guarda! You see what comes of trusting churchmen here in England; and 'tis because the women govern the families, that chaplains are so much in fashion. Trust a churchman!—trust a coward with your honour, a fool with your secret, a gamester with your purse, as soon as a priest with your wife or daughter; look you, guarda! I am no fool, look you.

Mrs. Caut. Nay, I know you are a wise man, brother.

Don. Why, sister, I have been fifteen years in Spain for it, at several times, look you: now in Spain, he is wise enough that is grave, politic enough that says little, and honourable enough that is jealous; and though I say it, that should not say it, I am as grave, grum, and jealous, as any Spaniard breathing.

Mrs. Caut. I know you are, brother.

Don. And I will be a Spaniard in everything still, and will not conform, not I, to their ill-favoured English customs, for I will wear my Spanish habit still, I will stroke my Spanish whiskers still, and I will eat my Spanish olio still; and my daughter shall go a maid to her husband's bed, let the English custom be what 'twill: I would fain see any finical, cunning, insinuating monsieur of the age, debauch, or steal away my daughter. But, well, has she seen my cousin? how long has he been in England?

Mrs. Caut. These three days.

Don. And she has seen him, has she? I was contented he should see her, intending him for her husband; but she has seen nobody else upon your certain knowledge?

Mrs. Caut. No, no, alas! how should she? 'tis impossible she should.

Don. Where is her chamber? pray let me see her.

Mrs. Caut. You'll find her, poor creature, asleep, I warrant you: or, if awake, thinking no hurt, nor of your coming this morning.

Don. Let us go to her, I long to see her, poor innocent wretch. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* DON DIEGO'S *House.*

Enter HIPPOLITA, GERRARD, *and* PRUE *at a distance.*

Ger. Am I not come upon your own summons, madam? and yet receive me so?

Hip. My summons, sir! no, I assure you; and if you do not like your reception, I cannot help it; for I am not used to receive men, I'd have you to know.

Ger. She is beautiful beyond all things I ever saw! [*Aside.*

Hip. I like him extremely! [*Aside.*

Ger. Come, fairest, why do you frown?

Hip. Because I am angry.

Ger. I am come on purpose to please you, then; do not receive me so unkindly.

Hip. I tell you, I do not use to receive men.—There has not been a man in the house before, but my cousin, this twelvemonth, I'd have you to know.

Ger. Then you ought to bid me the more welcome, I'd have you to know.

Hip. What! do you mock me too? I know I am but a home-bred simple girl; but I thought you gallants of the town had been better bred than to mock a poor girl in her father's own house. I have heard, indeed, 'tis a part of good breeding to mock people behind their backs, but not to their faces.

Ger. [*Aside.*] Pretty creature! she has not only the beauty, but the innocency of an angel.—[*To* HIPPOLITA.] Mock you, dear miss! no, I only repeated the words because they were yours, sweet miss; what we like we imitate.

Hip. Dear miss! sweet miss! how came you and I so well acquainted? this is one of your confident tricks, too, as I have been told; you'll be acquainted with a woman in the time you can help her over a bench in the playhouse, or to her coach. But I need not wonder at your confidence, since you could come in at the great gallery window just now. But, pray, who shall pay for the glass you have broken?

Ger. Pretty creature! your father might have made the window bigger then, since he has so fine a daughter, and will not allow people to come in at the door to her.

Hip. A pleasant man!—well, 'tis harder playing the hypocrite with him, I see, than with my aunt or father; and if dissimulation were not very natural to a woman, I'm sure I could not use it at this time: but the mask of simplicity and innocency is as useful to an intriguing woman as the mask of religion to a statesman, they say. [*Aside.*

Ger. Why do you look away, dearest miss?

Hip. Because you quarrelled with me just now for frowning upon you, and I cannot help it, if I look upon you.

Ger. O! let me see that face at any rate.

Hip. Would you have me frown upon you? for I shall be sure to do't.

Ger. Come, I'll stand fair: you have done your worst to my heart already.

Hip. Now I dare not look upon him, lest I should not be able to keep my word. [*Aside.*

Ger. Come, I am ready:—[*Aside.*] and yet I am afraid of her frowns.—[*To* HIPPOLITA.] Come, look, Ih—am ready, Ih—am ready.

Hip. But I am not ready. [*Aside.*

Ger. Turn, dear miss, come, Ih—am ready.

Hip. Are you ready then? I'll look. [*Turns upon him.*]—No, faith, I cannot frown upon him, if I should be hanged. [*Aside.*

Ger. Dear miss, I thank you, that look has no terror in't.

Hip. No, I cannot frown for my heart for blushing, I don't use to look upon men, you must know.

Ger. If it were possible anything could, those blushes would add to her beauty: well, bashfulness is the only out-of-fashioned thing that is agreebale. [*Aside.*

Hip. Ih—h—like this man strangely, I was going to say loved him. Courage then, Hippolita! make use of the only opportunity thou canst have to enfranchise thyself. Women formerly (they say) never knew how to make use of their time till it was past; but let it not be said so of a young woman of this age.—My damned aunt will be stirring presently:—well, then, courage, I say, Hippolita!—thou art full fourteen years old,—shift for thyself. [*Aside.*

Ger. So! I have looked upon her so long, till I am grown bashful too. Love and modesty come together like money and covetousness, and the more we have, the less we can show it. I dare not look her in the face now, nor speak a word. [*Aside.*

Hip. What, sir, methinks you look away now!

Ger. Because you would not look upon me, miss.

Hip. Nay, I hope you can't look me in the face, since you have done so rude a thing as to come in at the window upon me. Come, come, when once we women find the men bashful, then we take heart. Now I can look upon you as long as you will; let's see if you can frown upon me now.

Ger. Lovely innocency! no, you may swear I can't frown upon you, miss.

Hip. So! I knew you were ashamed of what you have done. Well, since you are ashamed, and because you did not come of your own head, but was sent by my cousin, you say—

Ger. Which I wonder at. [*Aside.*

Hip. For all these reasons, I do forgive you.

Ger. In token of your forgiveness then, dearest miss, let me have the honour to kiss your hand.

Hip. Nay, there 'tis; you men are like our little shock-dogs, if we don't keep you off from us, but use you a little kindly, you grow so fiddling and so troublesome, there is no enduring you.

Ger. O dear miss! if I am like your shock-dog, let it be in his privileges.

Hip. Why, I'd have you to know he does not lie with me.

Ger. 'Tis well guessed, miss, for one so innocent.

Hip. No, I always kick him off from the bed, and never will let him come near it; for of late, indeed, (I do not know what's the reason,) I don't much care for my shock-dog, nor my babies.

Ger. O then, miss, I may have hopes! for after the shock-dog and the babies, 'tis the man's turn to be beloved.

Hip. Why, could you be so good-natured as to come after my shock-dog in my love? it may be, indeed, rather than after one of your brother men.

Ger. Hah, ha, ha!—poor creature! a wonder of innocency! [*Aside.*

Hip. But I see you are humble, because you would kiss my hand.

Ger. No, I am ambitious therefore.

Hip. [*Aside.*] Well, all this fooling but loses time, I must make better use of it. [*To* GERRARD.] I could let you kiss my hand, but then I'm afraid you would take hold of me and carry me away.

Ger. Indeed I would not.

Hip. Come, I know you would.

Ger. Truly I would not.

Hip. You would! you would! I know you would.

Ger. I'll swear I wo' not—by—

Hip. Nay, don't swear, for you'll be the apter to do it then. [*Aside.*] I would not have him forswear it neither;—he does not like me, sure, well enough to carry me away.

Ger. Dear miss, let me kiss your hand.

Hip. I am sure you would carry me away if I should.

Ger. Be not afraid of it.

Hip. [*Aside.*] Nay, I am afraid of the contrary.—Either he dislikes me, and therefore will not be troubled with me, or what is as bad, he loves me and is dull, or fearful to displease me.

Ger. Trust me, sweetest! I can use no violence to you.

Hip. Nay, I am sure you would carry me away; what should you come in at the window for, if you did not mean to steal me?

Ger. If I should endeavour it, you might cry out, and I should be prevented.

Hip. [*Aside.*] Dull, dull man of the town! are all like thee? He is as dull as a country squire at questions and commands.—[*To* GERRARD.] No, if I should cry out never so loud, this is quite at the further end of the house, and there nobody could hear me.

Ger. I will not give you the occasion, dearest.

Hip. [*Aside.*] Well, I will quicken thy sense, if it be possible.—[*To* GERRARD.] Nay, I know you come to steal me away; because I am an heiress, and have twelve hundred pounds a year, lately left me by my mother's brother, which my father cannot meddle with, and which is the chiefest reason (I suppose) why he keeps me up so close.

Ger. Ha!

Hip. So!—this has made him consider. O money! powerful money! how the ugly, old, crooked, straight, handsome young women are beholden to thee! [*Aside.*

Ger. Twelve hundred pounds a year!

Hip. Besides, I have been told my fortune, and the woman said I should be stolen away, because she says 'tis the fate of heiresses to be stolen away.

Ger. Twelve hundred pounds a-year!— [*Aside.*

Hip. Nay, more, she described the man to me that was to do it, and he was as like you as could be. Have you any brothers?

Ger. Not any; 'twas I, I warrant you, sweetest.

Hip. So, he understands himself now. [*Aside.*

Ger. Well, madam, since 'twas foretold you, what do you think on't? 'tis in vain, you know, to resist fate.

Hip. I do know, indeed, they say, 'tis to no purpose: besides, the woman that told me my fortune, or you, have bewitched me—Ih—think. [*Sighs.*

Ger. My soul! my life! 'tis you have charms powerful as numberless, especially those of your innocency irresistible, and do surprise the wariest heart. Such mine was, while I could call it mine, but now 'tis yours for ever.

Hip. Well, well, get you gone then. I'll keep it safe for your sake.

Ger. Nay, you must go with me, sweetest.

Hip. Well, I see you will part with the jewel; but you will have the keeping of the cabinet to which you commit it.

Ger. Come, come, my dearest, let us be gone: Fortune as well as women must be taken in the humour.

As they are going out, PRUE *runs hastily to them.*

Prue. O miss, miss! your father, it seems, is just now arrived, and is here coming in upon you.

Hip. My father!

Enter DON DIEGO *and* MRS. CAUTION.

Don. My daughter and a man!

Mrs. Caut. A man! a man in the house!

Ger. Ha! what mean these?—a Spaniard!

Hip. What shall I do? Stay—Nay, pray stir not from me; but lead me about, as if you led me a corant. [*Leads her about.*

Don. Is this your government, sister? and this your innocent charge, that hath not seen the face of a man this twelvemonth? en hora mala!

Mrs. Caut. O, sure, it is not a man! it cannot be a man! [*Puts on her spectacles.*

Don. It cannot be a man! if he be not a man, he's a devil. He has her lovingly by the hand too, valga me el cielo!

Hip. Do not seem to mind them, but dance on, or lead me about still.

Ger. What d'ye mean by it. [*Apart to* HIPPOLITA.

Don. Hey, they are frolic, a-dancing!

Mrs. Caut. Indeed, they are dancing, I think.—Why, niece!

Don. Nay, hold a little: I'll make 'em dance in the devil's name; but it shall not be, la gailliarda. [*Draws his sword.*

Mrs. Caut. O niece! why niece! [CAUTION *holds him.*

Ger. Do you hear her? what do you mean? [*Apart to* HIPPOLITA.

Hip. Take no notice of them; but walk about still, and sing a little, sing a corant.

Ger. I can't sing: but I'll hum, if you will.

Don. Are you so merry? well I'll be with you: en hora mala!

Mrs. Caut. O niece, niece! why niece! oh—

Don. Why, daughter, my dainty daughter! My shame! my ruin! my plague!

[*Struggling, gets from* CAUTION, *goes towards them with his sword drawn.*

Hip. Mind him not, but dance and sing on.

Ger. A pretty time to dance and sing, indeed, when I have a Spaniard with a naked Toledo at my tail! No, pray excuse me, miss, from fooling any longer.

Hip. [*Turning about.*] O, my father, my father! poor father! you are welcome; pray give me your blessing.

Don. My blessing, en hora mala!

Hip. What! am I not your daughter, sir?

Don. My daughter! mi mal muerte!

Hip. My name's Hippolita, sir: I don't own your Spanish names. But, pray father, why do you frighten one so? you know I don't love to see a sword: what do you mean to do with that ugly thing out?

Don. I'll show you. Trayidor! ladron! demi houra thou diest. [*Runs at* GERRARD.

Ger. Not if I can help it, good Don. But by the names you give me, I find you mistake your man: I suppose some Spaniard has affronted you. [*Draws.*

Don. None but thee, ladron! and thou diest for't. [*Fight.*

Mrs. Caut. Oh! oh! oh!—help! help! help!

Hip. O—what, will you kill my poor dancing-master? [*Kneels.*

Don. A dancing-master! he's a fencing-master

rather, I think. But is he your dancing-master? umph—

Ger. So much wit and innocency were never together before. [*Aside.*

Don. Is he a dancing-master? [*Pausing.*

Mrs. Caut. Is he a dancing-master? He does not look like a dancing-master.

Hip. Pish!—you don't know a dancing-master: you have not seen one these threescore years, I warrant.

Mrs. Caut. No matter: but he does not look like a dancing-master.

Don. Nay, nay, dancing-masters look like gentlemen enough, sister: but he's no dancing-master, by drawing a sword so briskly. Those tripping outsides of gentlemen, are like gentlemen enough in everything but in drawing a sword; and since he is a gentleman, he shall die by mine.

[*Fight again.*

Hip. Oh! hold! hold!

Mrs. Caut. Hold! hold!—Pray, brother let's talk with him a little first; I warrant you I shall trap him; and if he confesses, you may kill him; for those that confess, they say, ought to be hanged—Let's see—

Ger. Poor Hippolita! I wish I had not had this occasion of admiring thy wit; I have increased my love, whilst I have lost my hopes; the common fate of poor lovers. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Caut. Come you are guilty, by that hanging down of your head. Speak: are you a dancing-master? Speak, speak; a dancing master?

Ger. Yes, forsooth, I am a dancing-master: ay, ay—

Don. How does it appear?

Hip. Why, there is his fiddle, there upon the table, father.

Mrs. Caut. No, busybody, but it is not:—that is my nephew's fiddle.

Hip. Why, he lent it to my cousin: I tell you it is his.

Mrs. Caut. Nay, it may be, indeed; he might lend it to him for aught I know.

Don. Ay, ay: but ask him, sister, if he be a dancing-master, where.

Mrs. Caut. Pray, brother, let me alone with him, I know what to ask him, sure.

Don. What, will you be wiser than I? nay, then stand away. Come, if you are a dancing-master, where's your school? Adonde! adonde!

Mrs. Caut. Why, he'll say, may be, he has ne'er a one.

Don. Who asked you, nimble chaps? So you have put an excuse in his head.

Ger. Indeed, sir, 'tis no excuse: I have no school.

Mrs. Caut. Well; but who sent you? how came you hither?

Ger. There I am puzzled indeed. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Caut. How came you hither, I say? how—

Ger. Why, how, how should I come hither?

Don. Ay, how should he come hither? Upon his legs.

Mrs. Caut. So, so! now you have put an excuse in his head too, that you have, so you have; but stay—

Don. Nay, with your favour, mistress, I'll ask him now.

Mrs. Caut. Y'facks, but you shan't! I'll ask him, and ask you no favour, that I will.

Don. Y'fackins, but you shan't ask him! if you go there too, look you, you prattle-box you! I'll ask him.

Mrs. Caut. I will ask him, I say!—come!

Don. Where?

Mrs. Caut. What!

Don. Mine's a shrewd question.

Mrs. Caut. Mine's as shrewd as yours.

Don. Nay, then, we shall have it.—Come, answer me; where's your lodging? come, come, sir.

Mrs. Caut. A shrewd question, indeed! at the Surgeons'-arms, I warrant you; for 'tis spring-time, you know.

Don. Must you make lies for him?

Mrs. Caut. But come, sir; what's your name?—answer me to that; come.

Don. His name! why, 'tis an easy matter to tell you a false name, I hope.

Mrs. Caut. So! must you teach him to cheat us?

Don. Why did you say my questions were not shrewd questions, then?

Mrs. Caut. And why would you not let me ask him the question, then? Brother, brother, ever while you live, for all your Spanish wisdom, let an old woman make discoveries: the young fellows cannot cheat us in anything, I'd have you to know. Set your old woman still to grope out an intrigue, because, you know, the mother found her daughter in the oven. A word to the wise, brother.

Don. Come, come, leave this tattling: he has dishonoured my family, debauched my daughter; and what if he could excuse himself? The Spanish proverb says, excuses neither satisfy creditors nor the injured.—The wounds of honour must have blood and wounds, St. Jago, para mi!

[*Kisses the crosses of his sword, and runs at* GERRARD.

Hip. O hold, dear father! and I'll confess all.

Ger. She will not, sure, after all. [*Aside.*

Hip. My cousin sent him; because, as he said, he would have me recover my dancing a little before our wedding, having made a vow he would never marry a wife who could not dance a corant. I am sure I was unwilling; but he would have him come, saying I was to be his wife as soon as you came, and therefore expected obedience from me.

Don. Indeed, the venture is most his, and the shame would be most his; for I know here in England, 'tis not the custom for the father to be much concerned what the daughter does; but I will be a Spaniard still.

Hip. Did not you hear him say last night he would send me one this morning?

Mrs. Caut. No, not I, sure. If I had, he had never come here.

Hip. Indeed, aunt, you grow old I see; your memory fails you very much. Did not you hear him, Prue, say he would send him to me?

Prue. Yes, I'll be sworn did I.

Hip. Look you there, aunt.

Mrs. Caut. I wonder I should not remember it.

Don. Come, come, you are a doting old fool.

Mrs. Caut. So! So! the fault will be mine now. But pray, mistress, how did he come in? I am sure I had the keys of the doors, which, till your father came in, were not opened to-day.

Hip. He came in just after my father, I suppose.

Mrs. Caut. It might be, indeed, while the por-

ters brought in the things, and I was talking with you.

Don. O, might he so, forsooth! you are a brave governante! Look you, you a duenna, voto!—and not know who comes in and out!

Mrs. Caut. So! 'tis my fault, I know.

Don. Your maid was in the room with you; was she not, child?

Hip. Yes, indeed, and indeed, father, all the while.

Don. Well, child, I am satisfied then.—But I hope he does not use the dancing-master's tricks, of squeezing your hands, setting your legs and feet, by handling your thighs and seeing your legs.

Hip. No, indeed, father: I'd give him a box on the ear if he should.

Don. Poor innocent!—Well, I am contented you should learn to dance, since, for aught I know, you shall be married to-morrow, or the next day at farthest: by that time you may recover a corant —a saraband I would say. And since your cousin, too, will have a dancing wife, it shall be so; and I'll see you dance myself. You shall be my charge these two days, and then I dare venture you in the hand of any dancing-master, even a saucy French dancing-master, look you.

Mrs. Caut. Well, have a care, though; for this man is not dressed like a dancing-master.

Don. Go, go, you dote; are they not (for the most part) better dressed and prouder than many a good gentleman? you would be wiser than I, would you, querno?

Mrs. Caut. Well, I say, only look to't, look to't.

Don. Hey, hey! Come, friend, to your business; teach her her lesson over again; let's see.

Hip. Come, master.

Don. Come, come, let's see your English method; I understand something of dancing myself —come.

Hip. Come, master.

Ger. I shall betray you yet, dearest miss; for I know not a step: I could never dance.

[*Apart to* HIPPOLITA.

Hip. No!

Don. Come, come, child.

Hip. Indeed I'm ashamed, father.

Don. You must not be ashamed, child; you'll never dance well if you are ashamed.

Hip. Indeed, I can't help it, father.

Don. Come, come, I say, go to't.

Hip. Indeed I can't, father, before you: 'tis my first lesson, and I shall do it so ill.—Pray, good father, go into the next room for this once; and the next time my master comes, you shall see I shall be confident enough.

Don. Poor, foolish, innocent creature!—Well, well, I will, child. Who but a Spanish kind of a father could have so innocent a daughter in England?—Well, I would fain see any one steal or debauch my daughter from me.

Hip. Nay, won't you go, father?

Don. Yes, yes, I go, child: we will all go but your maid.—You can dance before your maid?

Hip. Yes, yes, father: a maid at most times with her mistress is nobody.

[*Exeunt* DIEGO *and* MRS. CAUTION.

Ger. He peeps yet at the door.

Hip. Nay, father, you peep; indeed you must not see me. When we have done, you shall come in. [*She pulls the Door to.*

Prue. Indeed, little mistress, like the young kitten, you see you played with your prey till you had almost lost it.

Hip. 'Tis true, a good old mouser like you had taken it up, and run away with it presently.

Ger. Let me adore you, dearest miss, and give you— [*Going to embrace her.*

Hip. No, no embracing, good master! that ought to be the last lesson you are to teach me, I have heard.

Ger. Though an aftergame be the more tedious and dangerous, 'tis won, miss, with the more honour and pleasure: for all that, I repent we were put to't. The coming in of your father, as he did, was the most unlucky thing that ever befel me.

Hip. What then, you think I would have gone with you?

Ger. Yes; and you will go with me yet, I hope. —Courage, miss! we have yet an opportunity; and the gallery-window is yet open.

Hip. No, no; if I went, I would go for good and all: but now my father will soon come in again, and may quickly overtake us. Besides, now I think on't, you are a stranger to me; I know not where you live, nor whither you might carry me. For aught I know, you might be a spirit, and carry me to Barbadoes.

Ger. No, dear miss, I would carry you to court, the playhouses, and Hyde-park—

Hip. Nay, I know 'tis the trick of all you that spirit women away, to speak 'em mighty fair at first: but when you have got 'em in your clutches, you carry 'em into Yorkshire, Wales, or Cornwall, which is as bad as to Barbadoes; and rather than be served so, I would be a prisoner in London still as I am.

Ger. I see the air of this town, without the pleasures of it, is enough to infect women with an aversion for the country. Well, miss, since it seems you have some diffidence in me, give me leave to visit you as your dancing-master, now you have honoured me with the character; and under that I may have your father's permission to see you, till you may better know me and my heart, and have a better opportunity to reward it.

Hip. I am afraid to know your heart would require a great deal of time; and my father intends to marry me very suddenly to my cousin, who sent you hither.

Ger. Pray, sweet miss, let us make the better use of our time if it be short. But how shall we do with that cousin of yours in the mean time? we must needs charm him.

Hip. Leave that to me.

Ger. But (what's worse) how shall I be able to act a dancing-master, who ever wanted inclination and patience to learn myself?

Hip. A dancing-school in half an hour will furnish you with terms of the art. Besides, Love (as I have heard say) supplies his scholars with all sorts of capacities they have need of, in spite of nature:—but what has love to do with you?

Ger. Love, indeed, has made a grave gouty statesman fight duels, the soldier fly from his colours, a pedant a fine gentleman, nay, and the very lawyer a poet; and, therefore, may make me a dancing-master.

Hip. If he were your master.

Ger. I'm sure, dearest miss, there is nothing else which I cannot do for you already; and, therefore, may hope to succeed in that.

Re-enter DON DIEGO.

Don. Come, have you done?

Hip. O, my father again!

Don. Come, now let us see you dance.

Hip. Indeed I am not perfect yet; pray excuse me till the next time my master comes. But when must he come again, father?

Don. Let me see—friend, you must needs come after dinner again, and then at night again, and so three times to-morrow too. If she be not married to-morrow, (which I am to consider of,) she will dance a corant in twice or thrice teaching more; will she not? for 'tis but a twelvemonth since she came from Hackney-school.

Ger. We will lose no time, I warrant you, sir, if she be to be married to-morrow.

Don. True, I think she may be married to-morrow; therefore, I would not have you lose any time, look you.

Ger. You need not caution me, I warrant you, sir.—Sweet scholar, your humble servant: I will not fail you immediately after dinner.

Don. No, no, pray do not; and I will not fail to satisfy you very well, look you.

Hip. He does not doubt his reward, father, for his pains. If you should not, I would make that good to him.

Don. Come, let us go in to your aunt: I must talk with you both together, child.

Hip. I follow you, sir.

[*Exeunt* GERRARD *and* DON DIEGO.

Prue. Here's the gentlewoman o' th' next house come to see you, mistress.

Hip. [*Aside.*] She's come, as if she came expressly to sing the new song she sung last night. I must hear it; for 'tis to my purpose now.—

Enter Lady.

Madam, your servant: I dreamt all night of the song you sung last; the new song against delays in love. Pray, let's hear it again.

Lady *sings.*

Since we poor slavish women know
  Our men we cannot pick and choose.
To him we like why say we no,
  And both our time and lover lose?
With feign'd repulses and delays
  A lover's appetite we pall;
And if too long the gallant stays,
  His stomach's gone for good and all.
Or our impatient amorous guest
  Unknown to us away may steal,
And rather than stay for a feast,
  Take up with some coarse ready meal.
When opportunity is kind,
  Let prudent women be so too;
And if the men be to your mind,
  Till needs you must, ne'er let him go.
The match soon made is happy still,
  For only love has there to do.
Let no one marry 'gainst her will,
  But stand off when her parents woo,
And only to their suits be coy:
  For she whom jointure can obtain,
To let a fop her bed enjoy,
  Is but a lawful wench for gain.

Prue. Your father calls for you, miss.

[*Steps to the door.*

Hip. I come, I come; I must be obedient as long as I am with him. [*Pausing.*

Our parents who restrain our liberty,
  But take the course to make us sooner free,
Though all we gain be but new slavery;
  We leave our fathers, and to husbands flee.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—DON DIEGO'S *House.*

Enter MONSIEUR DE PARIS, HIPPOLITA, *and* PRUE.

Mons. Serviteur, serviteur, la cousine. Your maid told me she watched at the stair-foot for my coming; because you had a mind to speak with me before I saw your fader, it seem.

Hip. I would so, indeed, cousin.

Mons. Or ca! or ca! I know your affair. It is to tell me wat recreation you ade with Monsieur Gerrard. But did he come? I was afrait he would not come.

Hip. Yes, yes, he did come.

Mons. Ha! ha! ha!—and were you not infiniment divertisee and please? Confess.

Hip. I was indeed, cousin, I was very well pleased.

Mons. I do tinke so. I did tinke to come and be divertisee myself this morning with the sight of his reception: but I did rancounter last night wit dam company dat keep me up so late, I could not rise in de morning, malapeste de puteins!—

Hip. Indeed, we wanted you here mightily, cousin.

Mons. To elpe you to laugh: for if I adde been here, I had made such recreation wid dat coxcomb Gerrard!

Hip. Indeed, cousin, you need not have any subject or property to make one laugh, you are so pleasant yourself; and when you are but alone, you would make one burst.

Mons. Am I so happy, cousin, then, in the bon quality of making people laugh?

Hip. Mighty happy, cousin.

Mons. De grace?

Hip. Indeed.

Mons. Nay, sans vanitie, I observe, wheresoe'er I come, I make everybody merry; sans vanitie—da—

Hip. I do believe you do.

Mons. Nay, as I marche in de street, I can make de dull apprenty laugh and sneer.

Hip. This fool, I see, is as apt as an ill poet to mistake the contempt and scorn of people for applause and admiration. [*Aside.*

Mons. Ah, cousin, you see wat it is to have been in France! Before I went into France, I could get nobody to laugh at me, ma foy!

Hip. No? truly, cousin, I think you deserved it before; but you are improved, indeed, by going into France.

Mons. Ay, ay, the French education make us propre à tout. Beside, cousin, you must know, to play the fool is the science in France, and I didde go to the Italian academy at Paris thrice a-week to learn to play de fool of signior Scaramouche, who is the most excellent personage in the world for dat noble science. Angel is a dam English fool to him.

Hip. Methinks, now, Angel is a very good fool.

Mons. Nauh, nauh, Nokes is a better fool; but indeed the Englis are not fit to be fools: here are ver few good fools. 'Tis true, you have many a young cavalier who go over into France to learn to be de buffoon; but, for all dat, dey return but mauvais buffoon, jarnie!

Hip. I'm sure, cousin, you have lost no time there.

Mons. Auh, le brave Scaramouche!

Hip. But is it a science in France, cousin? and is there an academy for fooling? sure none go to it but players.

Mons. Dey are comedians dat are de matres: but all the beaux monde go to learn, as they do here of Angel and Nokes. For if you did go abroad into company, you would find the best almost of de nation conning in all places the lessons which dey have learned of the fools dere matres, Nokes and Angel.

Hip. Indeed!

Mons. Yes, yes, dey are de gens de quality that practise dat science most, and the most ambitieux; for fools and buffoons have been always most welcome to courts, and desired in all companies. Auh, to be de fool, de buffoon, is to be de great personage.

Hip. Fools have fortune, they say, indeed.

Mons. So say old Senèque.

Hip. Well, cousin, not to make you proud, you are the greatest fool in England, I am sure.

Mons. Non, non, de grace; non: Nokes de comedian is a pretty man, a pretty man for a comedian, da—

Hip. You are modest, cousin.—But lest my father should come in presently, which he will do as soon as he knows you are here, I must give you a caution, which 'tis fit you should have before you see him.

Mons. Vell, vell, cousin, vat is dat?

Hip. You must know, then (as commonly the conclusion of all mirth is sad), after I had a good while pleased myself in jesting, and leading the poor gentleman you sent into a fool's paradise, and almost made him believe I would go away with him, my father, coming home this morning, came in upon us, and caught him with me.

Mons. Malapeste!

Hip. And drew his sword upon him, and would have killed him; for you know my father's Spanish fierceness and jealousy.

Mons. But how did he come off then, teste non?

Hip. In short, I was fain to bring him off by saying he was my dancing-master.

Mons. Ha! ha! ha! ver good jeste.

Hip. I was unwilling to have the poor man killed, you know, for our foolish frolic with him: but then, upon my aunt's and father's inquiry, how he came in, and who sent him, I was forced to say you did, desiring I should be able to dance a corant before our wedding.

Mons. A ver good jest—da—still bettre as bettre.

Hip. Now, all that I am to desire of you is, to own you sent him, that I may not be caught in a lie.

Mons. Yes, yes, a ver good jest: Gerrard a mastre de dance! ha! ha! ha!

Hip. Nay, the jest is like to be better yet; for my father himself has obliged him now to come and teach me: so that now he must take the dancing-master upon him, and come three or four times to me before our wedding, lest my father, if he should come no more, should be suspicious I had told him a lie. And, for aught I know, if he should know, or but guess he were not a dancing-master, in his Spanish strictness and punctilios of honour, he might kill me as the shame and stain of his honour and family, which he talks of so much. Now, you know the jealous cruel fathers in Spain serve their poor innocent daughters often so; and he is more than a Spaniard.

Mons. Non, non, fear noting; I warrant you, he shall come as often as you will to de house; and your father shall never know who he is till we are married. But then I'll tell him all for the jest's sake.

Hip. But will you keep my counsel, dear cousin, till we are married?

Mons. Poor dear fool! I warrant thee, ma foy!

Hip. Nay, what a fool am I indeed! for you would not have me killed. You love me too well, sure, to be an instrument of my death.

Enter DON DIEGO, *walking gravely, a little* Black *behind him; and* MRS. CAUTION.

But here comes my father, remember.

Mons. I would no more tell him of it than I would tell you if I had been with a wench, jarnie! [*Aside.*]—She's afraid to be killed, poor wretch, and he's a capricious, jealous fop enough to do't:—but here he comes.—[*To* HIPPOLITA.] I'll keep thy counsel, I warrant thee, my dear soul, mon petit cœur.

Hip. Peace! peace! my father's coming this way.

Mons. Ay, but by his march he won't be near enough to hear us this half hour, ha! ha! ha!

[DON DIEGO *walks leisurely round* MONSIEUR, *surveying him, and shrugging up his shoulders, whilst* MONSIEUR *makes legs and faces aside.*

Don. Is that thing my cousin, sister?

Mrs. Caut. 'Tis he, sir.

Don. Cousin, I am sorry to see you—

Mons. Is that a Spanish compliment?

Don. So much disguised, cousin.

Mons. [*Aside.*] Oh! is it out at last, ventre!—[*To* DON DIEGO.] Serviteur, serviteur, à monsieur mon oncle; and I am glad to see you here within doors, most Spanish oncle, ha! ha! ha! but I should be sorry to see you in the streets, teste non!

Don. Why so?—would you be ashamed of me, hah—voto a St. Jago! would you? hauh—

Mons. Ay; it may be you would be ashamed yourself, monsieur mon oncle, of the great train you would get to wait upon your Spanish hose, puh—the boys would follow you, and hoot at you—vert and bleu! pardonne my Franch franchise, monsieur mon oncle.

Hip. We shall have sport anon, betwixt these two contraries. [*Apart to* PRUE.

Don. Dost thou call me *monsieur?* voto a St. Jago!

Mons. No, I did not call you Monsieur Voto a St. Jago! Sir, I know you are my uncle, Mr. James Formal—da—

Don. But I can hardly know you are my cousin, Mr. Nathaniel Paris.—But call me, sir, Don Diego henceforward, look you, and no monsieur. Call me monsieur! guarda!

Mons. I confess my error, sir; for none but a blind man would call you monsieur, ha! ha!—But, pray, do not call me neder Paris, but de Paris, de Paris, (si vous plait,) monsieur de Paris. Call me monsieur, and welcome, da—

Don. Monsieur de Pantaloons then, voto—

Mons. Monsieur de Pantaloons! a pretty name, a pretty name, ma foy! da—bien trove de Pantaloons! how much better den your de la Fountaines, de la Rivieres, de la Roches, and all the *de's* in France—da—well; but have you not the admiration for my pantaloon, Don Diego, mon oncle?

Don. I am astonished at them, verde deramente, they are wonderfully ridiculous.

Mons. Redicule! redicule! ah—'tis well you are my uncle, da—redicule! ha—is dere any ting in the universe so jenti as de pantaloons? any ting so raviaunt as de pantaloons? Auh—I could kneel down and varship a pair of jenti pantaloons. Vat, vat, you would have me have de admiration for dis outward skin of your thigh, which you call Spanish hose, fi! fi! fi!—ha! ha! ha!

Don. Dost thou deride my Spanish hose, young man, hauh?

Mons. In comparison of pantaloon, I do undervalue 'em indeed, Don Diego, mon oncle, ha! ha! ha!

Don. Thou art then a gavanho de malo gusto, look you.

Mons. You may call me vat you vill, oncle Don Diego; but I must needs say, your Spanish hose are scurvy hose, ugly hose, lousy hose, and stinking hose.

Don. Do not provoke me, boracho!

[*Puts his hand to his sword.*

Mons. Indeet, as for lousy, I recant dat epithete, for dere is scarce room in 'em for dat little animal, ha! ha! ha! but for stinking hose, dat epithete may stand; for how can they choose but stink, since they are so furieusmente close to your Spanish tail, da?

Hip. Ha! ha! ridiculous! [*Aside.*

Don. Do not provoke me, I say, en hora mala!

[*Seems to draw.*

Mons. Nay, oncle, I am sorry you are in de pation; but I must live and die for de pantaloon against de Spanish hose, da.

Don. You are a rash young man; and while you wear pantaloons, you are beneath my passion, voto—auh—o—they make thee look and waddle (with all those gewgaw ribbons) like a great, old, fat, slovenly water-dog.

Mons. And your Spanish hose, and your nose in the air, make you look like a great, grizzled, long Irish greyhound reaching a crust off from a high shelf, ha! ha! ha!

Don. Bueno! bueno!

Mrs. Caut. What, have you a mind to ruin yourself and break off the match?

Mons. Pshaw—wat do you tell me of the matche! d'ye tinke I will not vindicate pantaloons, morbleu!

Don. [*Aside.*] Well, he is a lost young man, I see, and desperately far gone in the epidemic malady of our nation, the affectation of the worst of French vanities; but I must be wiser than him, as I am a Spaniard. Look you, Don Diego, and endeavour to reclaim him by art and fair means, look you, Don Diego; if not, he shall never marry my daughter, look you, Don Diego, though he be my own sister's son, and has two thousand five hundred seventy-three pounds sterling, twelve shillings and twopence a year pennyrent, segaramente!—[*To* MONSIEUR.] Come, young man, since you are so obstinate, we will refer our difference to arbitration; your mistress, my daughter, shall be umpire betwixt us, concerning Spanish hose and pantaloons.

Mons. Pantaloons and Spanish hose, si vous plait.

Don. Your mistress is the fittest judge of your dress, sure.

Mons. I know ver vel dat most of the jeunesse of England will not change de ribband upon de crevat without de consultation of dere matress; but I am no Anglois, da—nor shall I make de reference of my dress to any in the universe, da—I judge by any in England! teste non! I would not be judge by any English looking-glass, jarnie!

Don. Be not positivo, young man.

Mrs. Caut. Nay, pray refer it, cousin, pray do.

Mons. Non, non, your servant, your servant, aunt.

Don. But, pray, be not so positive. Come hither, daughter, tell me which is best.

Hip. Indeed, father, you have kept me in universal ignorance, I know nothing.

Mons. And do you tink I shall refer an affair of that consequence to a poor young ting who have not seen the vorld, da? I am wiser than so, voto!

Don. Well, in short, if you will not be wiser, and leave off your French dress, stammering, and tricks, look you, you shall be a fool, and go without daughter, voto!

Mons. How! must I leave off my jantee French accoutrements, and speak base Englis too, or not marry my cousin, mon oncle Don Diego? Do not break off the match, do not; for know, I will not leave off my pantaloon and French pronuntiation for ne'er a cousin in England't, da.

Don. I tell you again, he that marries my daughter shall at least look like a wise man, for he shall wear the Spanish habit; I am a Spanish positivo.

Mons. Ver vel! ver vel! and I am a French positivo.

Don. Then I am definitivo; and if you do not go immediately into your chamber, and put on a Spanish habit, I have brought over on purpose for your wedding-clothes, and put off all these French fopperies and vanidades, with all your grimaces, agreeables, adorables, ma foys, and jarnies; I swear you shall never marry my daughter (and by an oath by Spaniard never broken) by my whiskers and snuff-box!

Mons. O hold! do not swear, uncle, for I love your daughter furieusment.

Don. If you love her, you'll obey me.

Mons. Auh, wat will become of me! but have the consideration. Must I leave off all the Franch beautes, graces, and embellisments, bote of my person, and language?

[*Exeunt* HIPPOLITA, MRS. CAUTION, *and* PRUE, *laughing.*

Don. I will have it so.

Mons. I am ruinne den, undonne. Have some consideration for me, for dere is not de least ribbon of my garniture but is as dear to me as your daughter, jarnie!

Don. Then, you do not deserve her; and for that reason I will be satisfied you love her better, or you shall not have her, for I am positivo.

Mons. Vill you break mine arte? Pray have de consideration for me.

Don. I say again, you shall be dressed before night from top to toe in the Spanish habit, or you shall never marry my daughter, look you.

Mons. If you will not have de consideration for me, have de consideration for your daughter; for she have de passionate amour for me, and like me in dis habite bettre den in yours, da.

Don. What I have said I have said, and I am uno positivo.

Mons. Will you not so mush as allow me one little French oate?

Don. No, you shall look like a Spaniard, but speak and swear like an Englishman, look you.

Mons. Helas! helas! den I shall take my leave, mort! teste ventre! jarnie! teste bleu! ventre bleu! ma foy! certes!

Don. [*Calls at the door.*] Pedro, Sanchez, wait upon this cavaliero into his chamber with those things I ordered you to take out of the trunks.—I would have you a little accustomed to your clothes before your wedding; for, if you comply with me, you shall marry my daughter to-morrow, look you.

Mons. Adieu then, dear pantaloon! dear belte! dear sword! dear peruke! and dear chappeau retroussé, and dear shoe, jarnie! adieu! adieu! adieu! Helas! helas! helas! will you have yet no pity?

Don. I am a Spanish positivo, look you.

Mons. And more cruel than de Spanish inquisitiono, to compel a man to a habit against his conscience; helas! helas! helas! [*Exit.*

Re-enter PRUE *with* GERRARD.

Prue. Here's the dancing-master, shall I call my mistress, sir?

Don. Yes.—[*Exit* PRUE.] O, you are as punctual as a Spaniard: I love your punctual men; nay, I think 'tis before your time something.

Ger. Nay, I am resolved your daughter, sir, shall lose no time by my fault.

Don. So, so, 'tis well.

Ger. I were a very unworthy man, if I should not be punctual with her, sir.

Don. You speak honestly, very honestly, friend; and I believe a very honest man, though a dancing-master.

Ger. I am very glad you think me so, sir.

Don. What, you are but a young man, are you married yet?

Ger. No, sir; but I hope I shall, sir, very suddenly, if things hit right.

Don. What, the old folks her friends are wary, and cannot agree with you so soon as the daughter can?

Ger. Yes, sir, the father hinders it a little at present; but the daughter, I hope, is resolved, and then we shall do well enough.

Don. What! you do not steal her, according to the laudable custom of some of your brother dancing-masters?

Ger. No, no, sir; steal her, sir! steal her! you are pleased to be merry, sir, ha! ha! ha!—[*Aside.*] I cannot but laugh at that question.

Don. No, sir, methinks you are pleased to be merry; but you say the father does not consent?

Ger. Not yet, sir; but 'twill be no matter whether he does or no.

Don. Was she one of your scholars? if she were, 'tis a hundred to ten but you steal her.

Ger. [*Aside.*] I shall not be able to hold laughing. [*Laughs.*

Don. Nay, nay, I find by your laughing you steal her: she was your scholar; was she not?

Ger. Yes, sir, she was the first I ever had, and may be the last too; for she has a fortune (if I can get her) will keep me from teaching to dance any more.

Don. So, so, then she is your scholar still it seems, and she has a good portion; I'm glad on't; nay, I knew you stole her.

Ger. [*Aside.*] My laughing may give him suspicions, yet I cannot hold. [*Laughs.*

Don. What! you laugh, I warrant, to think how the young baggage and you will mump the poor old father! but if all her dependence for a fortune be upon the father, he may chance to mump you both and spoil the jest.

Ger. I hope it will not be in his power, sir, ha! ha! ha!—[*Aside.*] I shall laugh too much anon. —[*To* DON DIEGO.] Pray, sir, be pleased to call for your daughter, I am impatient till she comes, for time was never more precious with me, and with her too; it ought to be so, sure, since you say she is to be married to-morrow.

Don. She ought to bestir her, as you say, indeed. Wuh, daughter! daughter! Prue! Hippolita! come away, child, why do you stay so long? [*Calls at the door.*

Re-enter HIPPOLITA, PRUE, *and* MRS. CAUTION.

Hip. Your servant, master; indeed I am ashamed you have stayed for me.

Ger. O, good madam, 'tis my duty; I know you came as soon as you could.

Hip. I knew my father was with you, therefore I did not make altogether so much haste as I might; but if you had been alone, nothing should have kept me from you. I would not have been so rude as to have made you stay a minute for me, I warrant you.

Don. Come, fiddle faddle, what a deal of ceremony there is betwixt your dancing-master and you, querno!—

Hip. Lord, sir! I hope you'll allow me to show my respect to my master, for I have a great respect for my master.

Ger. And I am very proud of my scholar, and am a very great honourer of my scholar.

Don. Come, come, friend, about your business, and honour the king.—[*To* MRS. CAUTION.] Your dancing-masters and barbers are such finical, smooth-tongued, tattling fellows; and if you set 'em once a-talking, they'll ne'er a-done, no more than when you set 'em a-fiddling: indeed, all that deal with fiddles are given to impertinency.

Mrs. Caut. Well, well, this is an impertinent fellow, without being a dancing-master. He is no more a dancing-master than I am a maid.

Don. What! will you still be wiser than I? voto! —Come, come, about with my daughter, man.

Prue. So he would, I warrant you, if your worship would let him alone.

Don. How now, Mrs. Nimblechaps!

Ger. Well, though I have got a little canting at the dancing-school since I was here, yet I do all so bunglingly, he'll discover me. [*Aside to* HIPPOLITA.

Hip. [*Aside.*] Try.—[*Aloud.*] Come take my hand, master.

Mrs. Caut. Look you, brother, the impudent harlotry gives him her hand.

Don. Can he dance with her without holding her by the hand?

Hip. Here, take my hand, master.

Ger. I wish it were for good and all.

[*Aside to her.*

Hip. You dancing-masters are always so hasty, so nimble.

Don. Voto a St. Jago! not that I see; about with her, man.

Ger. Indeed, sir, I cannot about with her as I would do, unless you will please to go out a little, sir; for I see she is bashful still before you, sir.

Don. Hey, hey, more fooling yet! come, come, about, about with her.

Hip. Nay, indeed, father, I am ashamed, and cannot help it.

Don. But you shall help it, for I will not stir. Move her, I say.—Begin, hussy, move when he'll have you.

Prue. I cannot but laugh at that, ha! ha! ha!

[*Aside.*

Ger. [*Apart to* HIPPOLITA.] Come, then, madam, since it must be so, let us try; but I shall discover all.—One, two, and coupee.

Mrs. Caut. Nay, d'ye see how he squeezes her hand, brother! O the lewd villain!

Don. Come, move, I say, and mind her not.

Ger. One, two, three, four, and turn round.

Mrs. Caut. D'ye see again? he took her by the bare arm.

Don. Come, move on, she's mad.

Ger. One, two, and a coupee.

Don. Come, one, two, and turn out your toes.

Mrs. Caut. There, there, he pinched her by the thigh: will you suffer it?

Ger. One, two, three, and fall back.

Don. Fall back, fall back, back; some of you are forward enough to back.

Ger. Back, madam.

Don. Fall back, when he bids you, hussy.

Mrs. Caut. How! how! fall back, fall back! marry, but she shall not fall back when he bids her.

Don. I say she shall.—Huswife, come.

Ger. She will, she will, I warrant you, sir, if you won't be angry with her.

Mrs. Caut. Do you know what he means by that now? You a Spaniard!

Don. How's that? I not a Spaniard! say such a word again—

Ger. Come forward, madam, three steps again.

Mrs. Caut. See, see, she squeezes his hand now: O the debauched harlotry!

Don. So, so, mind her not; she moves forward pretty well; but you must move as well backward as forward, or you'll never do anything to purpose.

Mrs. Caut. Do you know what you say, brother, yourself, now? are you at your beastliness before your young daughter?

Prue. Ha! ha! ha!

Don. How now, mistress, are you so merry?—Is this your staid maid as you call her, sister Impertinent?

Ger. I have not much to say to you, miss; but I shall not have an opportunity to do it, unless we can get your father out. [*Aside to* HIPPOLITA.

Don. Come, about again with her.

Mrs. Caut. Look you there, she squeezes his hand hard again.

Hip. Indeed, and indeed, father, my aunt puts me quite out; I cannot dance while she looks on for my heart, she makes me ashamed and afraid together.

Ger. Indeed, if you would please to take her out, sir, I am sure I should make my scholar do better, than when you are present, sir. Pray, sir, be pleased for this time to take her away; for the next time, I hope I shall order it so, we shall trouble neither of you.

Mrs. Caut. No, no, brother, stir not, they have a mind to be left alone. Come, there's a beastly trick in't; he's no dancing-master, I tell you.

Ger. Damned jade! she'll discover us.

[*Aside to* HIPPOLITA.

Don. What, will you teach me? nay, then I will go out, and you shall go out too, look you.

Mrs. Caut. I will not go out, look you.

Don. Come, come, thou art a censorious wicked woman, and you shall disturb them no longer.

Mrs. Caut. What! will you bawd for your daughter?

Don. Ay, ay; come go out, out, out.

Mrs. Caut. I will not go out, I will not go out; my conscience will not suffer me, for I know by experience what will follow.

Ger. I warrant you, sir, we'll make good use of our time when you are gone.

Mrs. Caut. Do you hear him again? don't you know what he means?

[*Exit* DON DIEGO *thrusting* MRS. CAUTION *out.*

Hip. 'Tis very well!—you are a fine gentleman to abuse my poor father so.

Ger. 'Tis but by your example, miss.

Hip. Well, I am his daughter, and may make the bolder with him, I hope.

Ger. And I am his son-in-law, that shall be; and therefore may claim my privilege too of making bold with him, I hope.

Hip. Methinks you should be contented in making bold with his daughter (for you have made very bold with her) sure.

Ger. I hope I shall make bolder with her yet.

Hip. I do not doubt your confidence, for you are a dancing-master.

Ger. Why, miss, I hope you would not have me a fine, senseless, whining, modest lover; for modesty in a man is as ill as the want of it in a woman.

Hip. I thank you for that, sir, now you have made bold with me indeed; but if I am such a confident piece, I am sure you made me so: if you had not had the confidence to come in at the window, I had not had the confidence to look upon a man: I am sure I could not look upon a man before.

Ger. But that I humbly conceive, sweet miss, was your father's fault, because you had not a man to look upon. But, dearest miss, I do not think you confident, you are only innocent; for that which would be called confidence, nay impudence, in a woman of years, is called innocency in one of

your age; and the more impudent you appear, the more innocent you are thought.

Hip. Say you so? has youth such privileges? I do not wonder then, most women seem impudent, since it is to be thought younger than they are, it seems. But indeed, master, you are as great an encourager of impudence, I see, as if you were a dancing-master in good earnest.

Ger. Yes, yes, a young thing may do anything; may leap out of the window and go away with her dancing-master, if she please.

Hip. So, so, the use follows the doctrine very suddenly.

Ger. Well, dearest, pray let us make the use we should of it; lest your father should make too bold with us, and come in before we would have him.

Hip. Indeed, old relations are apt to take that ill-bred freedom of pressing into young company at unseasonable hours.

Ger. Come, dear miss, let me tell you how I have designed matters; for in talking of anything else we lose time and opportunity. People abroad indeed say, the English women are the worst in the world in using an opportunity, they love tittle-tattle and ceremony.

Hip. 'Tis because, I warrant, opportunities are not so scarce here as abroad, they have more here than they can use; but let people abroad say what they will of English women, because they do not know 'em, but what say people at home?

Ger. Pretty innocent! ha! ha! ha!—Well, I say you will not make use of your opportunity.

Hip. I say, you have no reason to say so yet.

Ger. Well then, anon at nine of the clock at night I'll try you: for I have already bespoke a parson, and have taken up the three back-rooms of the tavern, which front upon the gallery-window, that nobody may see us escape; and I have appointed (precisely betwixt eight and nine of the clock when it is dark) a coach and six to wait at the tavern-door for us.

Hip. A coach and six! a coach and six, do you say? nay, then I see you are resolved to carry me away; for a coach and six, though there were not a man but the coachman with it, would carry away any young girl of my age in England:—a coach and six!

Ger. Then you will be sure to be ready to go with me?

Hip. What young woman of the town could ever say no to a coach and six, unless it were going into the country?—A coach and six! 'tis not in the power of fourteen years old to resist it.

Ger. You will be sure to be ready?

Hip. You are sure 'tis a coach and six?

Ger. I warrant you, miss.

Hip. I warrant you then they'll carry us merrily away:—a coach and six!

Ger. But have you charmed your cousin the monsieur (as you said you would) that he in the mean time say nothing to prevent us?

Hip. I warrant you.

Re-enter Don Diego; Mrs. Caution *pressing in after him.*

Mrs. Caut. I will come in.

Don. Well, I hope by this time you have given her full instructions; you have told her what and how to do, you have done all.

Ger. We have just done indeed, sir.

Hip. Ay, sir, we have just done, sir.

Mrs. Caut. And I fear just undone, sir.

Ger. D'ye hear that damned witch? [*Aside to* Hippolita.

Don. Come, leave your censorious prating; thou hast been a false, right woman thyself in thy youth, I warrant you.

Mrs. Caut. I right! I right! I scorn your words, I'd have you to know, and 'tis well known. I right! no, 'tis your dainty minx, that Jilflirt, your daughter here, that is right; do you see how her handkerchief is ruffled, and what a heat she's in?

Don. She has been dancing.

Mrs. Caut. Ay, ay, Adam and Eve's dance, or the beginning of the world; d'ye see how she pants?

Don. She has not been used to motion.

Mrs. Caut. Motion! motion! motion d'ye call it? no indeed, I kept her from motion till now:—motion with a vengeance!

Don. You put the poor bashful girl to the blush, you see, hold your peace.

Mrs. Caut. 'Tis her guilt, not her modesty, marry!

Don. Come, come, mind her not, child.—Come, master, let me see her dance now the whole dance roundly together; come, sing to her.

Ger. Faith, we shall be discovered after all; you know I cannot sing a note, miss. [*Aside to* Hippolita.

Don. Come, come, man.

Hip. Indeed, father, my master's in haste now; pray let it alone till anon at night, when, you say, he is to come again, and then you shall see me dance it to the violin; pray stay till then, father.

Don. I will not be put off so; come, begin.

Hip. Pray, father.

Don. Come, sing to her; come, begin.

Ger. Pray, sir, excuse me till anon, I am in some haste.

Don. I say, begin, I will not excuse you: come, take her by the hand, and about with her.

Mrs. Caut. I say, he shall not take her by the hand, he shall touch her no more; while I am here, there shall be no more squeezing and tickling her palm. Good Mr. dancing-master, stand off. [*Thrusts* Gerrard *away.*

Don. Get you out, Mrs. Impertinence.—[*To* Gerrard.] Take her by the hand, I say.

Mrs. Caut. Stand off, I say. He shall not touch her, he has touched her too much already.

Don. If patience were not a Spanish virtue, I would lay it aside now: I say, let 'em dance.

Mrs. Caut. I say, they shall not dance.

Hip. Pray, father, since you see my aunt's obstinacy, let us alone till anon, when you may keep her out.

Don. Well then, friend, do not fail to come.

Hip. Nay, if he fail me at last—

Don. Be sure you come, for she's to be married to-morrow:—do you know it?

Ger. Yes, yes, sir.—Sweet scholar, your humble servant, till night; and think in the mean time of the instructions I have given you, that you may be the readier when I come.

Don. Ay, girl, be sure you do,—and do you be sure to come.

Mrs. Caut. You need not be so concerned, he'll be sure to come I warrant you; but if I could help it, he should never set foot again in the house.

Don. You would frighten the poor dancing-

master from the house,—but be sure you come for all her.

Ger. Yes, sir.—[*Aside.*] But this jade will pay me when I am gone.

Mrs. Caut. Hold, hold, sir, I must let you out, and I wish I could keep you out. He a dancing-master! he's a chouce, a cheat, a mere cheat, and that you'll find.

Don. I find any man a cheat! I cheated by any man! I scorn your words.—I that have so much Spanish care, circumspection, and prudence, cheated by a man! Do you think I, who have been in Spain, look you, and have kept up my daughter a twelvemonth, for fear of being cheated of her, look you? I cheated of her!

Mrs. Caut. Well, say no more.

[*Exeunt* DON DIEGO, HIPPOLITA, MRS. CAUTION, *and* PRUE.

Ger. Well, old Formality, if you had not kept up your daughter, I am sure I had never cheated you of her.

The wary fool is by his care betray'd,
As cuckolds by their jealousy are made. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* DON DIEGO'S *House.*

Enter MONSIEUR DE PARIS *without a peruke, with a Spanish hat, a Spanish doublet, stockings, and shoes, but in pantaloons, a waist-belt, and a Spanish dagger in it, and a cravat about his neck.*—HIPPOLITA *and* PRUE *behind laughing.*

Mons. To see wat a fool love do make of one, jarnie! It do metamorphose de brave man in de beast, de satte, de animal.

Hip. Ha! ha! ha!

Mons. Nay, you may laugh, 'tis ver vell, I am become as ridicule for you as can be, mort bleu! I have deform myself into a ugly Spaniard.

Hip. Why, do you call this disguising yourself like a Spaniard, while you wear pantaloons still, and the cravat?

Mons. But is here not the double doublet, and the Spanish dagger aussy?

Hip. But 'tis as long as the French sword, and worn like it. But where's your Spanish beard, the thing of most consequence?

Mons. Jarnie! do you tink beards are as easy to be had as in the playhouses? non; but if here be no the ugly long Spanish beard, here are, I am certain, the ugly long Spanish ear.

Hip. That's very true, ha! ha! ha!

Mons. Auh de ingrate, dat de woman is! wen we poor men are your gallants, you laugh at us yourselves, and wen we are your husband, you make all the world laugh at us, jarnie!—Love, dam love, it makes the man more ridicule, than poverty, poetry, or a new title of honour, jarnie!

Enter DON DIEGO *and* MRS. CAUTION.

Don. What! at your jarnies still? voto!

Mons. Why, oncle, you are at your votos still.

Don. Nay, I'll allow you to be at your votos too, but not to make the incongruous match of Spanish doublet, and French pantaloons.

[*Holding his hat before his pantaloons.*

Mons. Nay, pray, dear oncle, let me unite France and Spain; 'tis the mode of France now, jarnie, voto!

Don. Well, I see I must pronounce: I told you, if you were not dressed in the Spanish habit to-night, you should not marry my daughter to-morrow, look you.

Mons. Well! am I not habiliee in de Spanish habit? my doublet, ear and hat, leg and feet, are Spanish, that dey are.

Don. I told you I was a Spanish positivo, voto!

Mons. Will you not spare my pantaloon! begar, I will give you one little finger to excuse my pantaloon, da—

Don. I have said, look you.

Mons. Auh, chere pantaloons! Speak for my pantaloons, cousin. My poor pantaloons are as dear to me as de scarf to de countree capitane, or de new-made officer: therefore have de compassion for my pantaloons, Don Diego, mon oncle. Helas! helas! helas! [*Kneels to* DON DIEGO.

Don. I have said, look you, your dress must be Spanish, and your language English: I am uno positivo.

Mons. And must speak base good English too! Ah! la pitiee! helas!

Don. It must be done; and I will see this great change ere it be dark, voto!—Your time is not long; look to't, look you.

Mons. Helas! helas! helas! dat Espagne should conquer la France in England! Helas! helas! helas! [*Exit.*

Don. You see what pains I take to make him the more agreeable to you, daughter.

Hip. But indeed, and indeed, father, you wash the blackamoor white, in endeavouring to make a Spaniard of a monsieur, nay, an English monsieur too; consider that, father: for when once they have taken the French plie (as they call it) they are never to be made so much as Englishmen again, I have heard say.

Don. What! I warrant you are like the rest of the young silly baggages of England, that like nothing but what is French? You would not have him reformed, you would have a monsieur to your husband, would you, querno?

Hip. No, indeed, father, I would not have a monsieur to my husband; not I indeed: and I am sure you'll never make my cousin otherwise.

Don. I warrant you.

Hip. You can't, you can't indeed, father: and you have sworn, you know, he shall never have me, if he does not leave off his monsieurship. Now, as I told you, 'tis as hard for him to cease being a monsieur, as 'tis for you to break a Spanish oath; so that I am not in any great danger of having a monsieur to my husband.

Don. Well, but you shall have him for your husband, look you.

Hip. Then you will break your Spanish oath.

Don. No, I will break him of his French tricks; and you shall have him for your husband, querno!

Hip. Indeed and indeed, father, I shall not have him.

Don. Indeed you shall, daughter.

Hip. Well, you shall see, father.

Mrs. Caut. No, I warrant you, she will not have him, she'll have her dancing-master rather: I know her meaning, I understand her.

Don. Thou malicious, foolish woman! you understand her!—But I do understand her; she says, I will not break my oath, nor he his French customs; so, through our difference, she thinks she shall not have him: but she shall.

Hip. But I shan't.

Mrs. Caut. I know she will not have him, because she hates him.

Don. I tell you, if she does hate him, 'tis a sign she will have him for her husband; for 'tis not one of a thousand that marries the man she loves, look you. Besides, 'tis all one whether she loves him now or not; for as soon as she's married, she'd be sure to hate him. That's the reason we wise Spaniards are jealous, and only expect, nay, will be sure our wives shall fear us, look you.

Hip. Pray, good father and aunt, do not dispute about nothing; for I am sure he will never be my husband to hate.

Mrs. Caut. I am of your opinion, indeed: I understand you. I can see as far as another.

Don. You! you cannot see so much as through your spectacles!—But I understand her: 'tis her mere desire to marriage makes her say she shall not have him; for your poor young things, when they are once in the teens, think they shall never be married.

Hip. Well, father, think you what you will; but I know what I think.

Re-enter MONSIEUR DE PARIS *in the Spanish habit entire, only with a cravat, and followed by the little* Blackamoor *with a golilia in his hand.*

Don. Come, did not I tell you, you should have him? look you there, he has complied with me, and is a perfect Spaniard.

Mons. Ay! ay! I am ugly rogue enough now, sure, for my cousin. But 'tis your father's fault, cousin, that you han't the handsomest, best-dressed man in the nation; a man bien mise.

Don. Yet again at your French! and a cravat on still! voto a St. Jago! off, off, with it!

Mons. Nay, I will ever hereafter speak clownish good English, do but spare me my cravat.

Don. I am uno positivo, look you.

Mons. Let me not put on that Spanish yoke, but spare me my cravat; for I love cravat furieusment.

Don. Again at your furieusments!

Mons. Indeed I have forgot myself: but have some mercy. [*Kneels.*

Don. Off, off, off with it, I say! Come, refuse the ornamento principal of the Spanish habit!

[*Takes him by the cravat, pulls it off, and the* Black *puts on the golilia.*

Mons. Will you have no mercy, no pity? alas! alas! alas! Oh! I had rather put on the English pillory, than that Spanish golilia, for 'twill be all a case I'm sure: for when I go abroad, I shall soon have a crowd of boys about me, peppering me with rotten eggs and turnips. Helas! helas!

[DON *puts on the golilia.*

Don. Helas, again!

Mons. Alas! alas! alas!

Hip. I shall die!

Prue. I shall burst; ha! ha! ha!

Mons. Ay! ay! you see what I am come to for your sake, cousin: and, uncle, pray take notice how ridiculous I am grown to my cousin, that loves me above all the world: she can no more forbear laughing at me, I vow and swear, than if I were as arrant a Spaniard as yourself.

Don. Be a Spaniard like me, and ne'er think people laugh at you: there was never a Spaniard that thought any one laughed at him. But what! do you laugh at a golilia, baggage?—Come, sirrah black, now do you teach him to walk with the verdadero gesto, gracia, and gravidad of a true Castilian.

Mons. Must I have my dancing-master too?—Come, little master, then, lead on.

[*The* Black *struts about the stage,* MONSIEUR *follows him, imitating awkwardly all he does.*

Don. Malo! malo! with your hat on your poll, as if it hung upon a pin!—the French and English wear their hats as if their horns would not suffer 'em to come over their foreheads, voto!

Mons. 'Tis true, there are some well-bred gentlemen have so much reverence for their peruke, that they would refuse to be grandees of your Spain for fear of putting on their hats, I vow and swear!

Don. Come, black, teach him now to make a Spanish leg.

Mons. Ha! ha! ha! your Spanish leg is an English courtesy, I vow and swear, hah! hah! hah!

Don. Well, the hood does not make the monk; the ass was an ass still, though he had the lion's skin on. This will be a light French fool, in spite of the grave Spanish habit, look you.—But, black, do what you can; make the most of him; walk him about.

Prue. Here are the people, sir, you sent to speak with about provisions for the wedding; and here are your clothes brought home too, mistress. [*Goes to the door and returns.*

Don. Well, I come.—Black, do what you can with him; walk him about.

Mons. Indeed, uncle, if I were as you, I would not have the grave Spanish habit so travestied: I shall disgrace it, and my little black master too, I vow and swear.

Don. Learn, learn of him; improve yourself by him—and do you walk him, walk him about soundly.—Come, sister, and daughter, I must have your judgments, though I shall not need 'em, look you.—Walk him, see you walk him.

[*Exeunt* DON DIEGO, HIPPOLITA, *and* MRS. CAUTION.

Mons. Jarnie! he does not only make a Spaniard of me, but a Spanish jennet, in giving me to his lackey to walk.—But come along, little master.

[*The* Black *instructs* MONSIEUR *on one side of the stage,* PRUE *standing on the other.*

Prue. O the unfortunate condition of us poor chambermaids! who have all the carking and caring, the watching and sitting up, the trouble and danger of our mistresses' intrigues, whilst they go away with all the pleasure! And if they can get their man in a corner, 'tis well enough; they ne'er think of the poor watchful chambermaid, who sits knocking her heels in the cold, for want of better exercise, in some melancholy lobby or entry, when she could employ her time every whit as well as her mistress, for all her quality, if she were but put to't. [*Aside.*

Black. Hold up your head, hold up your head, sir:—a stooping Spaniard, malo!

Mons. True, a Spaniard scorns to look upon the ground.

Prue. We can shift for our mistresses, and not for ourselves. Mine has got a handsome proper young man, and is just going to make the most of him; whilst I must be left in the lurch here with a couple of ugly little blackamoor boys in bonnets, and an old withered Spanish eunuch; not a servant else in the house, nor have I hopes of any comfortable society at all. [*Aside.*

Black. Now let me see you make your visit-leg, thus.

Mons. Auh, teste non!—ha! ha! ha!

Black. What! a Spaniard, and laugh aloud! No, if you laugh, thus only—so—Now your salutation in the street, as you pass by your acquaintance; look you, thus—if to a woman, thus—putting your hat upon your heart; if to a man, thus, with a nod—so—but frown a little more, frown:—but if to a woman you would be very ceremonious, thus—so—your neck nearer your shoulder—so—Now, if you would speak contemptibly of any man, or thing, do thus with your hand—so—and shrug up your shoulders till they hide your ears.—[MONSIEUR *imitating the* Black.] Now walk again.

[*The* Black *and* MONSIEUR *walk off the stage.*

Prue. All my hopes are in that coxcomb there: I must take up with my mistress's leavings, though we chambermaids are wont to be beforehand with them. But he is the dullest, modestest fool, for a frenchified fool, as ever I saw; for nobody could be more coming to him than I have been, though I say it, and yet I am ne'er the nearer. I have stolen away his handkerchief, and told him of it; and yet he would never so much as struggle with me to get it again: I have pulled off his peruke, untied his ribbons, and have been very bold with him: yet he would never be so with me: nay, I have pinched him, punched him, and tickled him; and yet he would never do the like for me.

Re-enter the Black *and* MONSIEUR.

Black. Nay, thus, thus, sir.

Prue. And to make my person more acceptable to him, I have used art, as they say; for every night since he came, I have worn the forehead-piece of bees-wax and hog's-grease, and every morning washed with butter-milk and wild tansy; and have put on every day for his only sake my Sunday's Bowdy stockings, and have new-chalked my shoes, as constantly as the morning came: nay, I have taken occasion to garter my stockings before him, as if unawares of him; for a good leg and foot, with good shoes and stockings, are very provoking, as they say; but the devil a bit would he be provoked.—But I must think of a way. [*Aside.*

Black. Thus, thus.

Mons. What, so! Well, well, I have lessons enough for this time, little master; I will have no more, lest the multiplicity of them make me forget them, da.—Prue, art thou there and so pensive? what art thou thinking of?

Prue. Indeed, I am ashamed to tell your worship.

Mons. What, ashamed! wert thou thinking then of my beastliness? ha! ha! ha!

Prue. Nay, then I am forced to tell your worship in my own vindication.

Mons. Come then.

Prue. But indeed, your worship—I 'm ashamed, that I am, though it was nothing but of a dream I had of your sweet worship last night.

Mons. Of my sweet worship! I warrant it was a sweet dream then:—what was it? ha! ha! ha!

Prue. Nay, indeed, I have told your worship enough already; you may guess the rest.

Mons. I cannot guess; ha! ha! ha! What should it be? prithee let's know the rest.

Prue. Would you have me so impudent?

Mons. Impudent! ha! ha! ha! Nay, prithee tell me; for I can't guess, da—

Prue. Nay, 'tis always so, for want of the men's guessing the poor women are forced to be impudent:—but I am still ashamed.

Mons. I will know it; speak.

Prue. Why then, methoughts last night you came up into my chamber in your shirt when I was in bed; and that you might easily do, for I have ne'er a lock to my door.—Now I warrant I am as red as my petticoat.

Mons. No, thou'rt as yellow as e'er thou wert.

Prue. Yellow, sir!

Mons. Ay, ay: but let's hear the dream out.

Prue. Why, can't you guess the rest now?

Mons. No, not I, I vow and swear: come, let's hear.

Prue. But can't you guess, in earnest?

Mons. Not I, the devil eat me!

Prue. Not guess yet! why then, methoughts you came to bed to me.—Now am I as red as my petticoat again.

Mons. Ha! ha! ha!—well, and what then? ha! ha! ha!

Prue. Nay, now I know by your worship's laughing you guess what you did. I'm sure I cried out, and waked all in tears, with these words in my mouth—*You have undone me! you have undone me! your worship has undone me!*

Mons. Ha! ha! ha!—but you waked, and found it was but a dream.

Prue. Indeed it was so lively, I know not whether 'twas a dream, or no.—But if you were not there, I'll undertake you may come when you will, and do anything to me you will, I sleep so fast.

Mons. No, no; I don't believe that.

Prue. Indeed you may, your worship—

Mons. It cannot be.

Prue. Insensible beast! he will not understand me yet; and one would think I speak plain enough. [*Aside.*

Mons. Well, but, Prue, what art thou thinking of?

Prue. Of the dream, whether it were a dream or no.

Mons. 'Twas a dream, I warrant thee.

Prue. Was it? I am hugeous glad it was a dream.

Mons. Ay, ay, it was a dream: and I am hugeous glad it was a dream too.

Prue. But now I have told your worship my door hath neither lock nor latch to it, if you should be so naughty as to come one night, and prove the dream true—I am so afraid on't.

Mons. Ne'er fear it:—dreams go by the contraries.

Prue. Then, by that I should come into your worship's chamber, and come to bed to your worship.—Now am I as red as my petticoat again, I warrant.

Mons. No, thou art no redder than a brick unburnt, Prue.

Prue. But if I should do such a trick in my sleep, your worship would not censure a poor harmless maid, I hope?—for I am apt to walk in my sleep.

Mons. Well, then, Prue, because thou shalt not shame thyself, poor wench, I'll be sure to lock my door every night fast.

Prue. [*Aside.*] So! so! this way I find will not do:—I must come roundly and downright to the business, like other women, or—

Enter GERRARD.

Mons. O, the dancing-master!

Prue. Dear sir, I have something to say to you in your ear, which I am ashamed to speak aloud.

Mons. Another time, another time, Prue. But now go call your mistress to her dancing-master. Go, go.

Prue. Nay, pray hear me, sir, first.

Mons. Another time, another time, Prue; prithee begone.

Prue. Nay, I beseech your worship hear me.

Mons. No; prithee begone.

Prue. [*Aside.*] Nay, I am e'en well enough served for not speaking my mind when I had an opportunity.—Well, I must be playing the modest woman, forsooth! a woman's hypocrisy in this case does only deceive herself. [*Exit.*

Mons. O, the brave dancing-master! the fine dancing-master! Your servant, your servant.

Ger. Your servant, sir: I protest I did not know you at first.—[*Aside.*] I am afraid this fool should spoil all, notwithstanding Hippolita's care and management; yet I ought to trust her:—but a secret is more safe with a treacherous knave than a talkative fool.

Mons. Come, sir, you must know a little brother dancing-master of yours—walking-master I should have said; for he teaches me to walk and make legs, by-the-bye. Pray, know him, sir; salute him, sir.—You Christian dancing-masters are so proud.

Ger. But, monsieur, what strange metamorphosis is this? You look like a Spaniard, and talk like an Englishman again, which I thought had been impossible.

Mons. Nothing impossible to love: I must do't, or lose my mistress, your pretty scholar; for 'tis I am to have her. You may remember I told you she was to be married to a great man, a man of honour and quality.

Ger. But does she enjoin you to this severe penance?—such I am sure it is to you.

Mons. No, no: 'tis by the compulsion of the starched fop her father, who is so arrant a Spaniard, he would kill you and his daughter, if he knew who you were: therefore have a special care to dissemble well. [*Draws him aside.*

Ger. I warrant you.

Mons. Dear Gerrard—Go, little master, and call my cousin: tell her her dancing-master is here. [*Exit* Black.]—I say, dear Gerrard, faith, I'm obliged to you for the trouble you have had. When I sent you, I intended a jest indeed; but did not think it would have been so dangerous a jest: therefore pray forgive me.

Ger. I do, do heartily forgive you.

Mons. But can you forgive me for sending you at first, like a fool as I was? 'Twas ill done of me: can you forgive me?

Ger. Yes, yes, I do forgive you.

Mons. Well, thou art a generous man, I vow and swear, to come and take upon you all this trouble, danger, and shame, to be thought a paltry dancing-master; and all this to preserve a lady's honour and life, who intended to abuse you. But I take the obligation upon me.

Ger. Pish! pish! you are not obliged to me at all.

Mons. Faith, but I am strangely obliged to you.

Ger. Faith, but you are not.

Mons. I vow and swear but I am.

Ger. I swear you are not.

Mons. Nay, thou art so generous a dancing-master, ha! ha! ha!

Re-enter DON DIEGO, HIPPOLITA, MRS. CAUTION, *and* PRUE.

Don. You shall not come in, sister.

Mrs. Caut. I will come in.

Don. You will not be civil.

Mrs. Caut. I'm sure they will not be civil, if I do not come in:—I must, I will.

Don. Well, honest friend, you are very punctual, which is a rare virtue in a dancing-master; I take notice of it, and will remember it; I will, look you.

Mons. So, silly, damned, politic Spanish uncle!—ha! ha! ha! [*Aside.*

Ger. My fine scholar, sir, there, shall never have reason, as I have told you, sir, to say I am not a punctual man; for I am more her servant than to any scholar I ever had.

Mons. Well said, i'faith!—[*Aside.*] Thou dost make a pretty fool of him, I vow and swear. But I wonder people can be made such fools of:—ha! ha! ha!

Hip. Well, master, I thank you; and I hope I shall be a grateful, kind scholar to you.

Mons. Ha! ha! ha! cunning little jilt, what a fool she makes of him too! I wonder people can be made such fools of, I vow and swear:—ha! ha! ha! [*Aside.*

Hip. Indeed, it shall go hard but I'll be a grateful, kind scholar to you.

Mrs. Caut. As kind as ever your mother was to your father, I warrant.

Don. How! again with your senseless suspicions!

Mons. Pish! pish! aunt.—[*Aside.*] Ha! ha! ha! she's a fool another way: she thinks she loves him, ha! ha! ha! Lord! that people should be such fools!

Mrs. Caut. Come, come, I cannot but speak: I tell you, beware in time; for he is no dancing-master, but some debauched person, who will mump you of your daughter.

Don. Will you be wiser than I still? Mump me of my daughter! I would I could see any one mump me of my daughter.

Mrs. Caut. And mump you of your mistress too, young Spaniard.

Mons. Ha! ha! ha! will you be wiser than I too, voto? Mump me of my mistress! I would I could see any one mump me of my mistress.—[*Aside to* GERRARD *and* HIPPOLITA.] I am afraid this damned old aunt should discover us, I vow and swear: be careful therefore and resolute.

Mrs. Caut. He! he does not go about his business like a dancing-master. He'll ne'er teach her to dance; but he'll teach her no goodness soon enough, I warrant.—He a dancing-master!

Mons. Ay, the devil eat me if he be not the best dancing-master in England now!—[*Aside to* GERRARD *and* HIPPOLITA.] Was not that well said, cousin? was it not? for he's a gentleman dancing-master, you know.

Don. You know him, cousin, very well? cousin, you sent him to my daughter?

Mons. Yes, yes, uncle:—know him!—[*Aside.*] We'll ne'er be discovered, I warrant, ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Caut. But will you be made a fool of too?

Mons. Ay, ay, aunt, ne'er trouble yourself.

Don. Come, friend, about your business; about with my daughter.

Hip. Nay, pray, father, be pleased to go out a little, and let us but practise awhile, and then you shall see me dance the whole dance to the violin.

Don. Tittle tattle! more fooling still!—Did not you say, when your master was here last, I should see you dance to the violin when he came again?

Hip. So I did, father: but let me practise a little first before, that I may be perfect. Besides, my aunt is here, and she will put me out: you know I cannot dance before her.

Don. Fiddle faddle!

Mons. [*Aside.*] They're afraid to be discovered by Gerrard's bungling, I see.—[*Aloud.*] Come, come, uncle, turn out; let 'em practise.

Don. I wont, voto a St. Jago! what a fooling's here!

Mons. Come, come, let 'em practise: turn out, turn out, uncle.

Don. Why can't she practise it before me?

Mons. Come, dancers and singers are sometimes humoursome; besides, 'twill be more grateful to you to see it danced all at once to the violin. Come, turn out, turn out, I say.

Don. What a fooling's here still among you, voto!

Mons. So, there he is with you, voto!—Turn out, turn out; I vow and swear you shall turn out.

[*Takes him by the shoulder.*

Don. Well, shall I see her dance it to the violin at last?

Ger. Yes, yes, sir; what do you think I teach her for?

Mons. Go, go, turn out.—[*Exit* DON DIEGO.] And you too, aunt.

Mrs. Caut. Seriously, nephew, I shall not budge; royally, I shall not.

Mons. Royally, you must, aunt: come.

Mrs. Caut. Pray hear me, nephew.

Mons. I will not hear you.

Mrs. Caut. 'Tis for. your sake I stay: I must not suffer you to be wronged.

Mons. Come, no wheedling, aunt: come away.

Mrs. Caut. That slippery fellow will do 't.

Mons. Let him do 't.

Mrs. Caut. Indeed, he will do 't; royally, he will.

Mons. Well, let him do 't, royally.

Mrs. Caut. He will wrong you.

Mons. Well, let him, I say; I have a mind to be wronged: what's that to you? I will be wronged, if you go there too, I vow and swear.

Mrs. Caut. You shall not be wronged.

Mons. I will.

Mrs. Caut. You shall not.

Re-enter DON DIEGO.

Don. What's the matter? won't she be ruled?—Come, come away: you shall not disturb 'em.

[DON DIEGO *and* MONSIEUR *thrust* MRS. CAUTION *out.*

Mrs. Caut. D'ye see how they laugh at you both?—Well, go to; the troth-telling Trojan gentlewoman of old was ne'er believed till the town was taken, rummaged, and ransacked. Even, even so—

Mons. Ha! ha! ha! turn out.—[*Exeunt* MRS. CAUTION *and* DON DIEGO.]—[*Aside.*] Lord, that people should be such arrant cuddens! ha! ha! ha!

Hip. No, no; I'd have you go out and hold the door, cousin; or see, my father will come in again before his time.

Mons. I will, I will then, sweet cousin.—'Tis well thought on; that was well thought on, indeed, for me to hold the door.

Hip. But be sure you keep him out, cousin, till we knock.

Mons. I warrant you, cousin.—Lord, that people should be made such fools of! Ha! ha! ha!

[*Exit.*

Ger. So, so:—to make him hold the door, while I steal his mistress, is not unpleasant.

Hip. Ay, but would you do so ill a thing, so treacherous a thing? Faith 'tis not well.

Ger. Faith, I can't help it, since 'tis for your sake.—Come, sweetest, is not this our way into the gallery?

Hip. Yes; but it goes against my conscience to be accessary to so ill a thing.—You say you do it for my sake?

Ger. Alas, poor miss! 'tis not against your conscience, but against your modesty, you think, to do it frankly.

Hip. Nay, if it be against my modesty, too, I can't do it indeed.

Ger. Come, come, miss, let us make haste:—all's ready.

Hip. Nay, faith, I can't satisfy my scruple.

Ger. Come, dearest, this is not a time for scruples nor modesty.—Modesty between lovers is as impertinent as ceremony between friends; and modesty is now as unseasonable as on the wedding night.—Come away, my dearest.

Hip. Whither?

Ger. Nay, sure we have lost too much time already. Is that a proper question now? If you would know, come along; for I have all ready.

Hip. But I am not ready.

Ger. Truly, miss, we shall have your father come in upon us, and prevent us again, as he did in the morning.

Hip. 'Twas well for me he did:—for, on my conscience, if he had not come in, I had gone clear away with you when I was in the humour.

Ger. Come, dearest, you would frighten me, as if you were not yet in the same humour.—Come, come away; the coach and six is ready.

Hip. 'Tis too late to take the air, and I am not ready.

Ger. You were ready in the morning.

Hip. Ay, so I was.

Ger. Come, come, miss:—indeed the jest begins to be none.

Hip. What! I warrant you think me in jest then?

Ger. In jest, certainly; but it begins to be troublesome.

Hip. But, sir, you could believe I was in earnest in the morning, when I but seemed to be ready to go with you; and why won't you believe me now when I declare to the contrary?—I take it unkindly, that the longer I am acquainted with you, you should have the less confidence in me.

Ger. For heaven's sake, miss, lose no more time thus; your father will come in upon us, as he did—

Hip. Let him if he will.

Ger. He'll hinder our design.

Hip. No, he will not; for mine is to stay here now.

Ger. Are you in earnest?

Hip. You'll find it so.

Ger. How! why, you confessed but now you would have gone with me in the morning.

Hip. I was in the humour then.

Ger. And I hope you are in the same still; you cannot change so soon.

Hip. Why, is it not a whole day ago?

Ger. What! are you not a day in the same humour?

Hip. Lord! that you who know the town, they say, should think any woman could be a whole day together in a humour!—ha! ha! ha!

Ger. Hey! this begins to be pleasant.—What! won't you go with me then after all?

Hip. No indeed, sir, I desire to be excused.

Ger. Then you have abused me all this while?

Hip. It may be so.

Ger. Could all that so natural innocency be dissembled?—faith, it could not, dearest miss.

Hip. Faith, it was, dear master.

Ger. Was it, faith?

Hip. Methinks you might believe me without an oath. You saw I could dissemble with my father, why should you think I could not with you?

Ger. So young a wheedle!

Hip. Ay, a mere damned jade I am.

Ger. And I have been abused, you say?

Hip. 'Tis well you can believe it at last.

Ger. And I must never hope for you?

Hip. Would you have me abuse you again?

Ger. Then you will not go with me?

Hip. No: but, for your comfort, your loss will not be great; and that you may not resent it, for once I'll be ingenuous, and disabuse you.—I am no heiress, as I told you, to twelve hundred pounds a-year; I was only a lying jade then.—Now will you part with me willingly, I doubt not.

Ger. I wish I could. [*Sighs.*

Hip. Come, now I find 'tis your turn to dissemble:—but men use to dissemble for money; will you dissemble for nothing?

Ger. 'Tis too late for me to dissemble.

Hip. Don't you dissemble, faith?

Ger. Nay, this is too cruel.

Hip. What! would you take me without the twelve hundred pounds a-year? would you be such a fool as to steal a woman with nothing?

Ger. I'll convince you; for you shall go with me:—and since you are twelve hundred pounds a-year the lighter, you'll be the easier carried away.

[*He takes her in his arms, she struggles.*

Prue. What! he takes her away against her will:—I find I must knock for my master then.

[*She knocks.*

Re-enter DON DIEGO *and* MRS. CAUTION.

Hip. My father! my father is here!

Ger. Prevented again!

[GERRARD *sets her down again.*

Don. What, you have done I hope now, friend, for good and all?

Ger. Yes, yes; we have done for good and all indeed.

Don. How now!—you seem to be out of humour, friend.

Ger. Yes, so I am; I can't help it.

Mrs. Caut. He's a dissembler in his very throat, brother.

Hip. Pray do not carry things so as to discover yourself, if it be but for my sake, good master.

[*Aside to* GERRARD.

Ger. She is grown impudent. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Caut. See, see, they whisper, brother!—to steal a kiss under a whisper!—O the harlotry!

Don. What's the matter, friend?

Hip. I say, for my sake be in humour, and do not discover yourself, but be as patient as a dancing-master still. [*Aside to* GERRARD.

Don. What, she is whispering to him indeed! What's the matter? I will know it, friend, look you.

Ger. Will you know it?

Don. Yes, I will know it.

Ger. Why, if you will know it then, she would not do as I would have her; and whispered me to desire me not to discover it to you.

Don. What, hussy, would you not do as he'd have you? I'll make you do as he'd have you.

Ger. I wish you would.

Mrs. Caut. 'Tis a lie; she'll do all he'll have her do, and more too, to my knowledge.

Don. Come, tell me what 'twas then she would not do—come, do it, hussy, or—Come, take her by the hand, friend. Come, begin:—let's see if she will not do anything now I'm here!

Hip. Come, pray be in humour, master.

Ger. I cannot dissemble like you.

Don. What, she can't dissemble already, can she?

Mrs. Caut. Yes, but she can: but 'tis with you she dissembles: for they are not fallen out, as we think. For I'll be sworn I saw her just now give him the languishing eye, as they call it, that is, the whiting's eye, of old called the sheep's eye:—I'll be sworn I saw it with these two eyes; that I did.

Hip. You'll betray us; have a care good master. [*Aside to* GERRARD.

Don. Hold your peace, I say, silly woman!—But does she dissemble already?—how do you mean?

Ger. She pretends she can't do what she should do; and that she is not in humour.—The common excuse of women for not doing what they should do.

Don. Come, I'll put her in humour.—Dance, I say.—Come, about with her, master.

Ger. [*Aside.*] I am in a pretty humour to dance.—[*To* HIPPOLITA.] I cannot fool any longer, since you have fooled me.

Hip. You would not be so ungenerous as to betray the woman that hated you! I do not do that yet. For heaven's sake! for this once be more obedient to my desires than your passion.

[*Aside to* GERRARD.

Don. What! is she humoursome still?—but methinks you look yourself as if you were in an ill-humour:—but about with her.

Ger. I am in no good dancing humour, indeed.

Re-enter MONSIEUR.

Mons. Well, how goes the dancing forward?—What, my aunt here to disturb 'em again?

Dan. Come! come! [GERRARD *leads her about.*

Mrs. Caut. I say, stand off:—thou shalt not come near. Avoid, Satan! as they say.

Don. Nay, then we shall have it:—nephew, hold her a little, that she may not disturb 'em.—Come, now away with her.

Ger. One, two, and a coupee.—[*Aside.*] Fooled and abused—

Mrs. Caut. Wilt thou lay violent hands upon thy own natural aunt, wretch? [*To* MONSIEUR.

Don. Come, about with her.

Ger. One, two, three, four, and turn round—[*Aside.*] by such a piece of innocency!

Mrs. Caut. Dost thou see, fool, how he squeezes her hand? [*To* MONSIEUR.

Mons. That won't do, aunt.

Hip. Pray, master, have patience, and let's mind our business.

Don. Why did you anger him then, hussy, look you?

Mrs. Caut. Do you see how she smiles in his face, and squeezes his hand now? [*To* MONSIEUR.

Mons. Your servant, aunt.—That won't do, I say.

Hip. Have patience, master.

Ger. [*Aside.*] I am become her sport!—[*Aloud.*] One, two, three—Death! hell! and the devil!

Don. Ay, they are three indeed!—But pray have patience.

Mrs. Caut. Do you see how she leers upon him, and clings to him? Can you suffer it? [*To* MONSIEUR.

Mons. Ay, ay.

Ger. One, two, three, and a slur.—Can you be so unconcerned after all?

Don. What! is she unconcerned?—Hussy, mind your business.

Ger. One, two, three, and turn round;—one, two, fall back—Hell and damnation!

Don. Ay, people fall back indeed into hell and damnation, Heaven knows!

Ger. One, two, three, and your honour.—I can fool no longer!

Mrs. Caut. Nor will I be withheld any longer, like a poor hen in her pen, while the kite is carrying away her chicken before her face.

Don. What, have you done?—Well then, let's see her dance it now to the violin.

Mons. Ay, ay, let's see her dance it to the violin.

Ger. Another time, another time.

Don. Don't you believe that, friend:—these dancing-masters make no bones of breaking their words. Did not you promise just now, I should see her dance it to the violin? and that I will too, before I stir.

Ger. Let Monsieur play then while I dance with her:—she can't dance alone.

Mons. I can't play at all; I'm but a learner:—but if you'll play, I'll dance with her.

Ger. I can't play neither.

Don. What! a dancing-master, and not play!

Mrs. Caut. Ay, you see what a dancing-master he is. 'Tis as I told you, I warrant.—A dancing-master, and not play upon the fiddle!

Don. How!

Hip. O you have betrayed us all! If you confess that, you undo us for ever. [*Apart to* GERRARD.

Ger. I cannot play;—what would you have me say? [*Apart to* HIPPOLITA.

Mons. I vow and swear we are all undone if you cannot play. [*Apart to* GERRARD.

Don. What! are you a dancing-master, and cannot play? Umph—

Hip. He is only out of humour, sir.—Here, master, I know you will play for me yet;—for he has an excellent hand. [*She offers* GERRARD *the violin.*

Mons. Ay, that he has.—[*Aside.*] At giving a box on the ear.

Don. Why does he not play, then?

Hip. Here, master, pray play for my sake. [*Gives* GERRARD *the violin.*

Ger. What would you have me do with it?—I cannot play a stroke. [*Apart to* HIPPOLITA.

Hip. No! stay—then seem to tune it, and break the strings. [*Apart to* GERRARD.

Ger. Come then.—[*Aside.*] Next to the devil's, the invention of women! They'll no more want an excuse to cheat a father with, than an opportunity to abuse a husband.—[*Aloud.*] But what do you give me such a damned fiddle with rotten strings, for?

[*Winds up the strings till they break, and throws the violin on the ground.*

Don. Hey-day! the dancing-master is frantic.

Mons. Ha! ha! ha! That people should be made such fools of! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Caut. He broke the strings on purpose, because he could not play.—You are blind, brother.

Don. What! will you see further than I, look you?

Hip. But pray, master, why in such haste? [GERRARD *offers to go.*

Ger. Because you have done with me.

Don. But don't you intend to come to-morrow, again?

Ger. Your daughter does not desire it.

Don. No matter; I do: I must be your paymaster, I'm sure. I would have you come betimes too; not only to make her perfect, but since you have so good a hand upon the violin, to play your part with half-a-dozen of musicians more, whom I would have you bring with you: for we will have a very merry wedding, though a very private one.—You'll be sure to come?

Ger. Your daughter does not desire it.

Don. Come, come, baggage, you shall desire it of him; he is your master.

Hip. My father will have me desire it of you, it seems.

Ger. But you'll make a fool of me again if I should come; would you not?

Hip. If I should tell you so, you'd be sure not to come.

Don. Come, come, she shall not make a fool of you, upon my word. I'll secure you, she shall do what you will have her.

Mons. Ha! ha! ha! So, so, silly Don. [*Aside.*

Ger. But, madam, will you have me come?

Hip. I'd have you to know, for my part, I care not whether you come or no:—there are other dancing-masters to be had:—it is my father's request to you. All that I have to say to you is a little good advice, which, because I will not shame you, I'll give you in private. [*Whispers* GERRARD.

Mrs. Caut. What! will you let her whisper with him too?

Don. Nay, if you find fault with it, they shall whisper, though I did not like it before:—I'll ha' nobody wiser than myself. But do you think, if 'twere any hurt, she would whisper it to him before us?

Mrs. Caut. If it be no hurt, why does she not speak aloud?

Don. Because she says she will not put the man out of countenance.

Mrs. Caut. Hey-day! put a dancing-master out of countenance!

Don. You say he is no dancing-master.

Mrs. Caut. Yes, for his impudence he may be a dancing-master.

Don. Well, well, let her whisper before me as much as she will to-night, since she is to be married to-morrow;—especially since her husband (that shall be) stands by consenting too.

Mons. Ay, ay, let 'em whisper, as you say, as much as they will before we marry.—[*Aside.*] She's making more sport with him, I warrant.—But I wonder how people can be fooled so.—Ha! ha! ha!

Don. Well, a penny for the secret, daughter.

Hip. Indeed, father, you shall have it for nothing to-morrow.

Don. Well, friend, you will not fail to come?

Ger. No, no, sir.—[*Aside.*] Yet I am a fool if I do.

Don. And be sure you bring the fiddlers with you, as I bid you.

Hip. Yes, be sure you bring the fiddlers with you, as I bid you.

Mrs. Caut. So, so: he'll fiddle your daughter out of the house.—Must you have fiddles, with a fiddle faddle?

Mons. Lord! that people should be made such fools of! Ha! ha! [*Aside.*

[*Exeunt* DON DIEGO, HIPPOLITA, MONSIEUR, MRS. CAUTION, *and* PRUE.

Ger. Fortune we sooner may than woman trust:
To her confiding gallant she is just;
But falser woman only him deceives,
Who to her tongue and eyes most credit gives. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* DON DIEGO'S *House.*

Enter MONSIEUR DE PARIS *and* Black, *stalking over the stage,* GERRARD *following.*

Mons. Good morrow to thee, noble dancing-master:—ha! ha! ha! your little black brother here, my master, I see, is the more diligent man of the two. But why do you come so late?—What! you begin to neglect your scholar, do you?—Little black master, con licentia, pray get you out of the room.—[*Exit* Black.] What! out of humour, man! a dancing-master should be like his fiddle, always in tune. Come, my cousin has made an ass of thee; what then? I know it.

Ger. Does he know it! [*Aside.*

Mons. But prithee don't be angry: 'twas agreed upon betwixt us, before I sent you, to make a fool of thee;—ha! ha! ha! ha!

Ger. Was it so?

Mons. I know you would be apt to entertain vain hopes from the summons of a lady: but, faith, the design was but to make a fool of thee, as you find.

Ger. 'Tis very well.

Mons. But indeed I did not think the jest would have lasted so long, and that my cousin would have made a dancing-master of you, ha! ha! ha!

Ger. The fool has reason, I find, and I am the coxcomb while I thought him so. [*Aside.*

Mons. Come, I see you are uneasy, and the jest of being a dancing-master grows tedious to you:—but have a little patience; the parson is sent for, and when once my cousin and I are married, my uncle may know who you are.

Ger. I am certainly abused. [*Aside.*

Mons. [*Listening.*] What do you say?

Ger. Merely fooled! [*Aside.*

Mons. Why do you doubt it? ha! ha! ha!

Ger. Can it be? [*Aside.*

Mons. Pish! pish! she told me yesterday as soon as you were gone, that she had led you into a fool's paradise, and made you believe she would go away with you—ha! ha! ha!

Ger. Did she so?—I am no longer to doubt it then. [*Aside.*

Mons. Ay, ay, she makes a mere fool of thee, I vow and swear; but don't be concerned, there's hardly a man of a thousand but has been made a fool of by some woman or other.—I have been made a fool of myself, man, by the women; I have, I vow and swear I have.

Ger. Well, you have, I believe it, for you are a coxcomb.

Mons. Lord! you need not be so touchy with one; I tell you but the truth, for your good; for though she does, I would not fool you any longer; but prithee don't be troubled at what can't be helped. Women are made on purpose to fool men: when they are children, they fool their fathers; and when they have taken their leaves of their hanging sleeves, they fool their gallants or dancing-masters,—ha! ha! ha!

Ger. Hark you, sir! to be fooled by a woman, you say, is not to be helped; but I will not be fooled by a fool.

Mons. You show your English breeding now; an English rival is so dull and brutish as not to understand raillery; but what is spoken in your passion I'll take no notice of, for I am your friend, and would not have you my rival to make yourself ridiculous.—Come, prithee, prithee, don't be so concerned; for, as I was saying, women first fool their fathers, then their gallants, and then their husbands; so that it will be my turn to be fooled too; (for your comfort;) and when they come to be widows, they would fool the devil, I vow and swear.—Come, come, dear Gerrard, prithee don't be out of humour, and look so sillily.

Ger. Prithee do not talk so sillily.

Mum's the...

Mons. Nay, faith, I am resolved to beat you out of this ill-humour.

Ger. Faith, I am afraid I shall first beat you into an ill-humour.

Mons. Ha! ha! ha! that thou shouldst be gulled so by a little gipsy, who left off her bib but yesterday!—faith I can't but laugh at thee.

Ger. Faith, then I shall make your mirth (as being too violent) conclude in some little misfortune to you. The fool begins to be tyrannical.

Mons. Ha! ha! ha! poor angry dancing-master! prithee match my Spanish pumps and legs with one of your best and newest sarabands; ha! ha! ha! come—

Ger. I will match your Spanish ear, thus, sir, and make you dance thus. [*Strikes and kicks him.*

Mons. How! sa! sa! sa! then I'll make you dance thus.

[Monsieur *draws his sword and runs at him, but* Gerrard *drawing, he retires.*

Hold! hold a little!—[*Aside.*] A desperate disappointed lover will cut his own throat, then sure he will make nothing of cutting his rival's throat.

Ger. Consideration is an enemy to fighting; if you have a mind to revenge yourself, your sword's in your hand.

Mons. Pray, sir, hold your peace; I'll ne'er take my rival's counsel, be't what 'twill. I know what you would be at; you are disappointed of your mistress, and could hang yourself, and therefore will not fear hanging. But I am a successful lover, and need neither hang for you nor my mistress: nay, if I should kill you, I know I should do you a kindness; therefore e'en live, to die daily with envy of my happiness. But if you will needs die, kill yourself, and be damned for me, I vow and swear.

Ger. But won't you fight for your mistress?

Mons. I tell you, you shall not have the honour to be killed for her; besides, I will not be hit in the teeth by her as long as I live, with the great love you had for her. Women speak well of their dead husbands; what will they do of their dead gallants?

Ger. But if you will not fight for her, you shall dance for her, since you desired me to teach you to dance too:—I'll teach you to dance thus—

[*Strikes his sword at his legs,* Monsieur *leaps.*

Mons. Nay, if it be for the sake of my mistress, there's nothing I will refuse to do.

Ger. Nay, you must dance on.

Mons. Ay, ay, for my mistress, and sing too, la, la, la, ra, la.

Enter Hippolita *and* Prue.

Hip. What! swords drawn betwixt you two! what's the matter?

Mons. [*Aside.*] Is she here?—[*Aloud.*] Come, put up your sword; you see this is no place for us; but the devil eat me if you shall not eat my sword, but—

Hip. What's the matter, cousin?

Mons. Nothing, nothing, cousin, but your presence is a sanctuary for my greatest enemy, or else, teste non!—

Hip. What, you have not hurt my cousin, sir, I hope? [*To* Gerrard.

Ger. How! she's concerned for him! nay, then I need not doubt, my fears are true. [*Aside.*

Mons. What was that you said, cousin? hurt me!—ha! ha! ha! hurt me!—if any man hurt me, he must do it basely; he shall ne'er do it when my sword's drawn, sa! sa! sa!

Hip. Because you will ne'er draw your sword, perhaps.

Mons. [*Aside.*] Scurvily guessed.—[*Aloud.*] You ladies may say anything; but, cousin, pray do not you talk of swords and fighting; meddle with your guitar, and talk of dancing with your dancing-master there, ha! ha! ha!

Hip. But I am afraid you have hurt my master, cousin:—he says nothing; can he draw his breath?

Mons. No, 'tis you have hurt your master, cousin, in the very heart, cousin, and therefore he would hurt me; for love is a disease makes people as malicious as the plague does.

Hip. Indeed, poor master, something does ail you.

Mons. Nay, nay, cousin, faith don't abuse him any longer; he's an honest gentleman, and has been long of my acquaintance, and a man of tolerable sense, to take him out of his love; but prithee, cousin, don't drive the jest too far for my sake.

Ger. He counsels you well, pleasant, cunning, jilting miss, for his sake; for if I am your divertisement, it shall be at his cost, since he's your gallant in favour.

Hip. I don't understand you.

Mons. But I do, a pox take him! and the custom that so orders it, forsooth! that if a lady abuse or affront a man, presently the gallant must be beaten; nay, what's more unreasonable, if a woman abuse her husband, the poor cuckold must bear the shame as well as the injury. [*Aside.*

Hip. But what's the matter, master? what was it you said?

Ger. I say, pleasant, cunning, jilting lady, though you make him a cuckold, it will not be revenge enough for me upon him for marrying you.

Hip. How! my surly, huffing, jealous, senseless, saucy master?

Mons. Nay, nay, faith, give losers leave to speak, losers of mistresses especially, ha! ha! ha! Besides, your anger is too great a favour for him; I scorn to honour him with mine you see.

Hip. I tell you my saucy master, my cousin shall never be made that monstrous thing you mention, by me.

Mons. Thank you, I vow and swear, cousin; no, no, I never thought I should.

Ger. Sure you marry him by the sage maxim of your sex, which is, wittols make the best husbands, that is cuckolds.

Hip. Indeed, master, whatsoever you think, I would sooner choose you for that purpose than him.

Mons. Ha! ha! ha! there she was with him, i'faith:—I thank you for that, cousin, I vow and swear.

Hip. Nay, he shall thank me for that too:—but how came you two to quarrel? I thought, cousin, you had had more wit than to quarrel, or more kindness for me than to quarrel here. What if my father, hearing the bustle, should have come in? he would have soon discovered our false dancing-master (for passion unmasks every man), and then the result of your quarrel had been my ruin.

Mons. Nay, you had both felt his desperate, deadly, daunting dagger:—there are your de's for you!

Hip. Go, go presently therefore, and hinder my father from coming in, whilst I put my master into a better humour, that we may not be discovered, to the prevention of our wedding, or worse when he comes; go, go.

Mons. Well, well, I will, cousin.

Hip. Be sure you let him not come in this good while.

Mons. No, no, I warrant you.—[*Goes out and returns.*]—But if he should come before I would have him, I'll come before him, and cough and hawk soundly, that you may not be surprised. Won't that do well, cousin?

Hip. Very well, pray begone. — [*Exit* MONSIEUR.] Well, master, since I find you are quarrelsome and melancholy, and would have taken me away without a portion, three infallible signs of a true lover, faith here's my hand now in earnest, to lead me a dance as long as I live.

Ger. How's this! you surprise me as much, as when first I found so much beauty and wit in company with so much innocency. But, dearest, I would be assured of what you say, and yet dare not ask the question. You h—— do not abuse me again? You h—— will fool me no more sure?

Hip. Yes, but I will sure.

Ger. How? nay, I was afraid on't.

Hip. For, I say, you are to be my husband, and you say husbands must be wittols, and some strange things to boot.

Ger. Well, I will take my fortune.

Hip. But have a care, rash man.

Ger. I will venture.

Hip. At your peril; remember I wished you to have a care: forewarned, fore-armed.

Prue. Indeed now, that's fair; for most men are fore-armed before they are warned.

Hip. Plain dealing is some kind of honesty however, and few women would have said so much.

Ger. None but those who would delight in a husband's jealousy, as the proof of his love and her honour.

Hip. Hold, sir, let us have a good understanding betwixt one another at first, that we may be long friends. I differ from you in the point; for a husband's jealousy, which cunning men would pass upon their wives for a compliment, is the worst can be made 'em; for indeed it is a compliment to their beauty, but an affront to their honour.

Ger. But, madam—

Hip. So that upon the whole matter I conclude, jealousy in a gallant is humble true love, and the height of respect, and only an undervaluing of himself to overvalue her; but in a husband 'tis arrant sauciness, cowardice, and ill-breeding, and not to be suffered.

Ger. I stand corrected, gracious miss.

Hip. Well, but have you brought the gentlemen fiddlers with you, as I desired?

Ger. They are below.

Hip. Are they armed well?

Ger. Yes, they have instruments too that are not of wood; but what will you do with them?

Hip. What did you think I intended to do with them? when I whispered you to bring gentlemen of your acquaintance instead of fiddlers, as my father desired you to bring, pray what did you think I intended?

Ger. Faith, e'en to make fools of the gentlemen fiddlers, as you had done of your gentleman dancing-master.

Hip. I intended 'em for our guard and defence against my father's Spanish and Guinea force, when we were to make our retreat from hence; and to help us to take the keys from my aunt, who has been the watchful porter of this house this twelvemonth; and this design (if your heart do not fail you) we will put in execution as soon as you have given your friends below instructions.

Ger. Are you sure your heart will stand right still? You flinched last night, when I little expected it, I am sure.

Hip. The time last night was not so proper for us as now, for reasons I will give you. But besides that, I confess I had a mind to try whether your interest did not sway you more than your love; whether the twelve hundred pounds a-year I told you of had not made a greater impression in your heart than Hippolita: but finding it otherwise—yet hold, perhaps upon consideration you are grown wiser; can you yet, as I said, be so desperate, so out of fashion, as to steal a woman with nothing?

Ger. With you I can want nothing, nor can be made by anything more rich or happy.

Hip. Think well again; can you take me without the twelve hundred pounds a-year,—the twelve hundred pounds a-year?

Ger. Indeed, miss, now you begin to be unkind again, and use me worse than e'er you did.

Hip. Well, though you are so modest a gentleman as to suffer a wife to be put upon you with nothing, I have more conscience than to do it. I have the twelve hundred pounds a-year out of my father's power, which is yours, and I am sorry it is not the Indies to mend your bargain.

Ger. Dear miss, you but increase my fears, and not my wealth. Pray let us make haste away; I desire but to be secure of you:—come, what are you thinking of?

Hip. I am thinking if some little, filching, inquisitive poet should get my story, and represent it to the stage, what those ladies who are never precise but at a play would say of me now;—that I were a confident, coming piece, I warrant, and they would damn the poor poet for libelling the sex. But sure, though I give myself and fortune away frankly, without the consent of my friends, my confidence is less than theirs who stand off only for separate maintenance.

Ger. They would be widows before their time, have a husband and no husband:—but let us begone, lest fortune should recant my happiness, now you are fixed, my dearest miss.

[*He kisses her hand.*

Re-enter MONSIEUR, *coughing, followed by* DON DIEGO.

Hip. Oh, here's my father!

Don. How now, sir!—What, kissing her hand! what means that, friend, ha?—Daughter, ha! do you permit this insolence, ha? voto a mi hora!

Ger. We are prevented again.

[*Aside to* HIPPOLITA.

Hip. Ha! ha! ha! you are so full of your Spanish jealousy, father; why, you must know he is a city dancing-master, and they, forsooth, think it fine to kiss the hand at the honour before the corant.

Mons. Ay, ay, ay, uncle, don't you know that?

Don. Go to, go to, you are an easy French fool; there's more in it than so, look you.

Mons. I vow and swear there's nothing more in't, if you'll believe one.—[*Aside to* HIPPOLITA *and* GERRARD.] Did not I cough and hawk? a jealous, prudent husband could not cough and hawk louder at the approach of his wife's chamber in visiting time, and yet you would not hear me. He'll make now ado about nothing, and you'll be discovered both.

Don. Umph, umph,—no, no, I see it plain, he is no dancing-master: now I have found it out, and I think I can see as far into matters as another: I have found it now, look you.

Ger. My fear was prophetical. [*Aside to* HIPPOLITA.

Hip. What shall we do?—nay, pray, sir, do not stir yet. [GERRARD *offers to go out with her.*

Enter MRS. CAUTION.

Mrs. Caut. What's the matter, brother? what's the matter?

Don. I have found it out, sister, I have found it out, sister; this villain here is no dancing-master—but a dishonourer of my house and daughter: I caught him kissing her hand.

Mons. Pish! pish! you are a strange Spanish kind of an uncle, that you are.—A dishonourer of your daughter, because he kissed her hand! pray how could he honour her more? he kissed her hand, you see, while he was making his honour to her.

Don. You are an unthinking, shallow French fop, voto!—But I tell you, sister, I have thought of it, and have found it out; he is no dancing-master, sister. Do you remember the whispering last night? I have found out the meaning of that too; and I tell you, sister, he's no dancing-master, I have found it out.

Mrs. Caut. You found it out! marry come up, did not I tell you always he was no dancing-master?

Don. You tell me! you silly woman, what then? what of that?—You tell me! d'ye think I heeded what you told me? but I tell you now I have found it out.

Mrs. Caut. I say I found it out.

Don. I say 'tis false, gossip, I found him out.

Mrs. Caut. I say I found him out first, say you what you will.

Don. Sister, mum, not such a word again, guarda!—You found him out!

Mrs. Caut. Nay, I must submit, or dissemble like other prudent women, or— [*Aside.*

Don. Come, come, sister, take it from me, he is no dancing-master.

Mrs. Caut. O yes, he is a dancing-master.

Don. What! will you be wiser than I every way?—remember the whispering, I say.

Mrs. Caut. [*Aside.*] So, he thinks I speak in earnest, then I'll fit him still.—[*To* DON DIEGO.] But what do you talk of their whispering! they would not whisper any ill before us, sure.

Don. Will you still be an idiot, a dolt, and see nothing?

Mons. Lord! you'll be wiser than all the world, will you? are we not all against you? pshaw! pshaw! I ne'er saw such a donnissimo as you are, I vow and swear.

Don. No, sister, he's no dancing-master; for now I think on't too, he could not play upon the fiddle.

Mrs. Caut. Pish! pish! what dancing-master can play upon a fiddle without strings?

Don. Again, I tell you he broke them on purpose, because he could not play; I have found it out now, sister.

Mrs. Caut. Nay, you see farther than I, brother, [GERRARD *offers to lead her out.*

Hip. For Heaven's sake stir not yet. [*Aside to* GERRARD.

Don. Besides, if you remember, they were perpetually putting me out of the room; that was, sister, because they had a mind to be alone, I have found that out too:—now, sister, look you, he is no dancing-master.

Mrs. Caut. But has he not given her a lesson often before you?

Don. Ay, but, sister, he did not go about his business like a dancing-master; but go, go down to the door, somebody rings. [*Exit* MRS. CAUTION.

Mons. I vow and swear, uncle, he is a dancing-master; pray be appeased.—Lord! d'ye think I'd tell you a lie?

Don. If it prove to be a lie, and you do not confess it, though you are my next heir after my daughter, I will disown thee as much as I do her, for thy folly and treachery to thyself, as well as me.—You may have her, but never my estate, look you.

Mons. How! I must look to my hits then. [*Aside.*

Don. Look to't.

Mons. [*Aside.*] Then I had best confess all, before he discover all, which he will soon do.—

Enter Parson.

O here's the parson too! he won't be in choler, nor brandish toledo before the parson sure?—[*To* DON DIEGO.] Well, uncle, I must confess, rather than lose your favour, he is no dancing-master.

Don. No!

Ger. What! has the fool betrayed us then at last? nay, then 'tis time to be gone; come away, miss. [*Going out.*

Don. Nay, sir, if you pass this way, my toledo will pass that way, look you. [*Thrusts at him with his sword.*

Hip. O hold, Mr. Gerrard!—Hold father!

Mons. I tell you, uncle, he's an honest gentleman, means no hurt, and came hither but upon a frolic of mine and your daughter's. [*Stops* DON DIEGO.

Don. Ladron! traidor!

Mons. I tell you all's but a jest, a mere jest, I vow and swear.

Don. A jest!—jest with my honour, voto! ha! no family to dishonour but the grave, wise, noble, honourable, illustrious, puissant, and right worshipful family of the Formals!—Nay, I am contented to reprieve you, till you know who you have dishonoured, and convict you of the greatness of your crime before you die. We are descended, look you—

Mons. Nay, pray, uncle, hear me.

Don. I say, we are descended—

Mons. 'Tis no matter for that.

Don. And my great, great, great-grandfather was—

Mons. Well, well, I have something to say more to the purpose.

Don. My great, great, great-grandfather, I say, was—

Mons. Well, a pinmaker in—

Don. But he was a gentleman for all that, fop, for he was a sergeant to a company of the train-bands; and my great-great-grandfather was—

Mons. Was his son, what then? won't you let me clear this gentleman?

Don. He was, he was—

Mons. He was a felt-maker, his son a wine-cooper, your father a vintner, and so you came to be a Canary merchant.

Don. But we were still gentlemen, for our coat was, as the heralds say—was—

Mons. Was! your sign was the Three Tuns, and the field Canary; now let me tell you, this honest gentleman—

Don. Now, that you should dare to dishonour this family!—by the graves of my ancestors in Great St. Ellen's church—

Mons. Yard.

Don. Thou shalt die for't, ladron!

[*Runs at* GERRARD.

Mons. Hold, hold, uncle, are you mad?

Hip. Oh! oh!—

Mons. Nay then, by your own Spanish rules of honour (though he be my rival), I must help him; [*Draws his sword.*] since I brought him into danger.—[*Aside.*] Sure he will not show his valour upon his nephew and son-in-law, otherwise I should be afraid of showing mine.—Here, Mr. Gerrard, go in here, nay, you shall go in, Mr. Gerrard, I'll secure you all; and, parson, do you go in too with 'em, for I see you are afraid of a sword and the other world, though you talk of it so familiarly, and make it so fine a place.

[*Opens a door, and thrusts* GERRARD, HIPPOLITA, Parson, *and* PRUE *in, then shuts it, and guards it with his sword.*

Don. Tu quoque, Brute!

Mons. Nay, now, uncle, you must understand reason.—What, you are not only a Don, but you are a Don Quixote too, I vow and swear!

Don. Thou spot, sploach of my family and blood! I will have his blood, look you.

Mons. Pray, good Spanish uncle, have but patience to hear me. Suppose—I say, suppose he had done, done, done the feat to your daughter.

Don. How! done the feat! done the feat! done the feat! en hora mala!

Mons. I say, suppose, suppose—

Don. Suppose!

Mons. I say, suppose he had, for I do but suppose it; well, I am ready to marry her, however. Now marriage is as good a solder for cracked female honour as blood; and can't you suffer the shame but for a quarter of an hour, till the parson has married us? and then if there be any shame, it becomes mine; for here in England, the father has nothing to do with the daughter's business, honour, what d'ye call't, when once she's married, d'ye see.

Don. England! what d'ye tell me of England? I'll be a Spaniard still, voto a me hora! and I will be revenged.—Pedro! Juan! Sanchez!

[*Calls at the door.*

Re-enter MRS. CAUTION, *followed by* FLIRT *and* FLOUNCE, *in vizard masks.*

Mrs. Caut. What's the matter, brother?

Don. Pedro! Sanchez! Juan!—but who are these, sister? are they not men in women's clothes? what make they here?

Mrs. Caut. They are relations, they say, of my cousin's, who pressed in when I let in the parson; they say my cousin invited 'em to his wedding.

Mons. Two of my relations!—[*Aside.*] Ha! they are my cousins indeed of the other night; a pox take 'em!—but that's no curse for 'em; a plague take 'em then!—but how came they here?

Don. [*Aside.*] Now must I have witnesses too of the dishonour of my family; it were Spanish prudence to despatch 'em away out of the house, before I begin my revenge. [*To* FLIRT *and* FLOUNCE.] What are you? what make you here? who would you speak with?

Flirt. With Monsieur.

Don. Here he is.

Mons. Now will these jades discredit me, and spoil my match just in the coupling minute. [*Aside.*

Don. Do you know 'em?

Mons. Yes, sir, sure, I know 'em.—[*Aside to 'em.*] Pray, ladies, say as I say, or you will spoil my wedding, for I am just going to be married; and if my uncle or mistress should know who you are, it might break off the match.

Flou. We come on purpose to break the match.

Mons. How!

Flirt. Why, d'ye think to marry, and leave us so in the lurch?

Mons. What do the jades mean? [*Aside.*

Don. Come, who are they? what would they have? If they come to the wedding, ladies, I assure you there will be none to-day here.

Mons. They won't trouble you, sir; they are going again.—Ladies, you hear what my uncle says; I know you won't trouble him.—[*Aside.*] I wish I were well rid of 'em.

Flou. You shall not think to put us off so.

[*Aside.*

Don. Who are they? what are their names?

Flirt. We are, sir—

Mons. Nay, for heaven's sake don't tell who you are, for you will undo me, and spoil my match infallibly. [*Aside to 'em.*

Flou. We care not, 'tis our business to spoil matches.

Mons. You need not, for I believe married men are your best customers, for greedy bachelors take up with their wives.

Don. Come, pray ladies, if you have no business here, be pleased to retire; for few of us are in humour to be so civil to you as you may deserve.

Mons. Ay, prithee, dear jades, get you gone.

Flirt. We will not stir.

Don. Who are they, I say, fool? and why don't they go?

Flou. We are, sir—

Mons. Hold! hold!—They are persons of honour and quality, and—

Flirt. We are no persons of honour and quality, sir, we are—

Mons. They are modest ladies, and being in a kind of disguise, will not own their quality.

Flou. We modest ladies!

Mons. Why, sometimes you are in the humour to pass for women of honour and quality; prithee, dear jades, let your modesty and greatness come upon you now. [*Aside to 'em.*

Flirt. Come, sir, not to delude you, as he would have us, we are—

Mons. Hold, hold!—

Flirt. The other night at the French-house—

Mons. Hold, I say!—'Tis even true as Gerrard says, the women will tell, I see.

Flou. If you would have her silent, stop her mouth with that ring.

Mons. Will that do't? here, here—'Tis worth one hundred and fifty pounds.—[*Takes off his ring and gives it her.*] But I must not lose my match, I must not lose a trout for a fly.—That men should live to hire women to silence!

Re-enter GERRARD, HIPPOLITA, Parson, *and* PRUE.

Don. Oh, are you come again!

[*Draws his sword and runs at 'em,* MONSIEUR *holds him.*

Mons. Oh! hold! hold! uncle!—What, are you mad, Gerrard, to expose yourself to a new danger? why would you come out yet?

Ger. Because our danger now is over, I thank the parson there. And now we must beg—

[GERRARD *and* HIPPOLITA *kneel.*

Mons. Nay, faith, uncle, forgive him now, since he asks you forgiveness upon his knees, and my poor cousin too.

Hip. You are mistaken, cousin; we ask him blessing, and you forgiveness.

Mons. How, how, how! what do you talk of blessing? what do you ask your father blessing, and he ask me forgiveness? but why should he ask me forgiveness?

Hip. Because he asks my father's blessing.

Mons. Pish! pish! I don't understand you, I vow and swear.

Hip. The parson will expound it to you, cousin.

Mons. Hey! what say you to it, parson?

Par. They are married, sir.

Mons. Married!

Mrs. Caut. Married! so, I told you what twould come to.

Don. You told us!—

Mons. Nay, she is setting up for the reputation of a witch.

Don. Married!—Juan, Sanchez, Pedro, arm! arm! arm!

Mrs. Caut. A witch! a witch!

Hip. Nay, indeed, father, now we are married, you had better call the fiddlers.—Call 'em, Prue, quickly. [*Exit* PRUE.

Mons. Who do you say, married, man?

Par. Was I not sent for on purpose to marry 'em? why should you wonder at it?

Mons. No, no, you were to marry me, man, to her; I knew there was a mistake in't somehow; you were merely mistaken, therefore you must do your business over again for me now.—The parson was mistaken, uncle, it seems, ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Caut. I suppose five or six guineas made him make the mistake, which will not be rectified now, nephew. They'll marry all that come near 'em, and, for a guinea or two, care not what mischief they do, nephew.

Don. Married!—Pedro! Sanchez!

Mons. How! and must she be his wife then for ever and ever? have I held the door then for this, like a fool as I was?

Mrs. Caut. Yes, indeed!

Mons. Have I worn golilia here for this? little breeches for this?

Mrs. Caut. Yes, truly.

Mons. And put on the Spanish honour with the habit, in defending my rival? nay then, I'll have another turn of honour in revenge. Come, uncle, I'm of your side now, sa! sa! sa! but let's stay for our force; Sanchez, Juan, Pedro, arm! arm! arm!

Enter two Blacks *and a* Spaniard, *followed by* PRUE, MARTIN, *and five other gentlemen-like fiddlers.*

Don. Murder the villain! kill him!

[*Running all upon* GERRARD.

Mar. Hold! hold! sir!

Don. How now! who sent for you, friends?

Mar. We fiddlers, sir, often come unsent for.

Don. And you are often kicked down stairs for't too.

Mar. No, sir, our company was never kicked, I think.

Don. Fiddlers, and not kicked! then to preserve your virgin honour, get you down stairs quickly; for we are not at present disposed much for mirth, voto!

Mons. [*Peeping.*] A pox! is it you, is it you, Martin?—Nay, uncle, then 'tis in vain; for they won't be kicked down stairs, to my knowledge. They are gentlemen fiddlers, forsooth! A pox on all gentlemen fiddlers and gentlemen dancing-masters! say I.

Don. How! ha! [*Pausing.*

Mons. Well, Flirt, now I am a match for thee: now I may keep you.—And there's little difference betwixt keeping a wench and marriage; only marriage is a little the cheaper; but the other is the more honourable now, vert and bleu! Nay, now I may swear a French oath too. Come, come, I am thine; let us strike up the bargain: thine, according to the honourable institution of keeping. —Come.

Flirt. Nay, hold, sir; two words to the bargain; first, I have ne'er a lawyer here to draw articles and settlements.

Mons. How! is the world come to that? A man cannot keep a wench without articles and settlements! Nay, then 'tis e'en as bad as marriage, indeed, and there's no difference betwixt a wife and a wench.

Flirt. Only in cohabitation; for the first article shall be against cohabitation:—we mistresses suffer no cohabitation.

Mons. Nor wives neither now.

Flirt. Then separate maintenance, in case you should take a wife, or I a new friend.

Mons. How! that too! then you are every whit as bad as a wife.

Flirt. Then my house in town and yours in the country, if you will.

Mons. A mere wife!

Flirt. Then my coach apart, as well as my bed apart.

Mons. As bad as a wife still!

Flirt. But take notice, I will have no little, dirty, second-hand chariot new furbished, but a large, sociable, well-painted coach; nor will I keep it till it be as well known as myself, and it come to be called Flirt-coach; nor will I have such pitiful horses as cannot carry me every night to the Park; for I will not miss a night in the Park, I'd have you to know.

Mons. 'Tis very well: you must have your great, gilt, fine painted coaches. I'm sure they are grown so common already amongst you, that ladies of quality begin to take up with hackneys again, jarnie!—But what else?

Fools scraping out of the embarrassment

Flirt. Then, that you do not think I will be served by a little dirty boy in a bonnet, but a couple of handsome, lusty, cleanly footmen, fit to serve ladies of quality, and do their business as they should do.

Mons. What then?

Flirt. Then, that you never grow jealous of them.

Mons. Why, will you make so much of them?

Flirt. I delight to be kind to my servants.

Mons. Well, is this all?

Flirt. No.—Then, that when you come to my house, you never presume to touch a key, lift up a latch, or thrust a door, without knocking beforehand: and that you ask no questions, if you see a stray piece of plate, cabinet, or looking-glass, in my house.

Mons. Just a wife in everything.—But what else?

Flirt. Then, that you take no acquaintance with me abroad, nor bring me home any when you are drunk, whom you will not be willing to see there when you are sober.

Mons. But what allowance? let's come to the main business; the money.

Flirt. Stay, let me think: first for advance-money, five hundred pounds for pins.

Mons. A very wife!

Flirt. Then you must take the lease of my house, and furnish it as becomes one of my quality; for don't you think we'll take up with your old Queen Elizabeth furniture, as your wives do.

Mons. Indeed there she is least like a wife, as she says.

Flirt. Then for house-keeping, servants' wages, clothes, and the rest, I'll be contented with a thousand pounds a year present maintenance, and but three hundred pounds a year separate maintenance for my life, when your love grows cold. But I am contented with a thousand pounds a year, because for pendants, neck-laces, and all sorts of jewels, and such trifles, nay, and some plate, I will shift myself as I can; make shifts, which you shall not take any notice of.

Mons. A thousand pounds a year! what will wenching come to? Time was a man might have fared as well at a much cheaper rate, and a lady of one's affections, instead of a house, would have been contented with a little chamber, three pair of stairs backward, with a little closet or ladder to't; and instead of variety of new gowns and rich petticoats, with her dishabillie, or flame-colour gown called Indian, and slippers of the same, would have been contented for a twelvemonth; and instead of visits and gadding to plays, would have entertained herself at home with *St. George for England*, *The Knight of the Sun*, or, *The Practice of Piety;* and instead of sending her wine and meat from the French-houses, would have been contented, if you had given her, poor wretch, but credit at the next chandler's and chequered cellar; and then, instead of a coach, would have been well satisfied to have gone out and taken the air for three or four hours in the evening in the balcony, poor soul. Well, Flirt, however, we'll agree:—'tis but three hundred pounds a year separate maintenance, you say, when I am weary of thee and the charge.

Don. [*Aside.*]—Robbed of my honour, my daughter, and my revenge too! O my dear honour! Nothing vexes me, but that the world should say I had not Spanish policy enough to keep my daughter from being debauched from me. But methinks my Spanish policy might help me yet. I have it—so—I will cheat 'em all; for I will declare I understood the whole plot and contrivance, and connived at it, finding my cousin a fool, and not answering my expectation. Well, but then if I approve of the match, I must give this mock-dancing-master my estate, especially since half he would have in right of my daughter, and in spite of me. Well, I am resolved to turn the cheat upon themselves, and give them my consent and estate.

Mons. Come, come, ne'er be troubled, uncle: 'twas a combination, you see, of all these heads and your daughter's, you know what I mean, uncle, not to be thwarted or governed by all the Spanish policy in Christendom. I'm sure my French policy would not have governed her: so since I have 'scaped her, I am glad I have 'scaped her, jarnie!

Mrs. Caut. Come, brother, you are wiser than I, you see: ay, ay.

Don. No, you think you are wiser than I now, in earnest: but know, while I was thought a gull, I gulled you all, and made them and you think I knew nothing of the contrivance. Confess, did not you think verily that I knew nothing of it, and that I was a gull?

Mrs. Caut. Yes indeed, brother, I did think verily you were a gull.

Hip. How's this? [*Listening.*

Don. Alas, alas! all the sputter I made was but to make this young man, my cousin, believe, when the thing should be effected, that it was not with my connivance or consent: but since he is so well satisfied, I own it. For do you think I would ever have suffered her to marry a monsieur, a monsieur? guarda!—besides, it had been but a beastly incestuous kind of a match, voto!—

Mrs. Caut. Nay, then I see, brother, you are wiser than I indeed.

Ger. So, so.

Mrs. Caut. Nay, young man, you have danced a fair dance for yourself, royally; and now you may go jig it together till you are both weary. And though you were so eager to have him, Mrs. Minx, you'll soon have your bellyfull of him, let me tell you, mistress.

Prue. Ha! ha!

Mons. How, uncle! what was't you said? Nay, if I had your Spanish policy against me, it was no wonder I missed of my aim, mon foy!

Don. I was resolved too my daughter should not marry a coward, therefore made the more ado to try you, sir. But I find you are a brisk man of honour, firm stiff Spanish honour; and that you may see I deceived you all along, and you not me, ay, and am able to deceive you still, for I know now you think that I will give you little or nothing with my daughter, like other fathers, since you have married her without my consent—but, I say, I'll deceive you now; for you shall have the most part of my estate in present, and the rest at my death.—There's for you: I think I have deceived you now, look you.

Ger. No, indeed, sir, you have not deceived me; for I never suspected your love to your daughter, nor your generosity.

Don. How, sir! have a care of saying I have not deceived you, lest I deceive you another way,

guarda!—Pray, gentlemen, do not think any man could deceive me, look you; that any man could steal my daughter, look you, without my connivance:—

The less we speak, the more we think;
And he sees most, that seems to wink.

Hip. So, so, now I could give you my blessing, father; now you are a good complaisant father, indeed:—

When children marry, parents should obey,
Since love claims more obedience far than they.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY FLIRT.

The ladies first I am to compliment,
Whom (if he could) the poet would content,
But to their pleasure then they must consent.
Most spoil their sport still by their modesty,
And when they should be pleased, cry out, *O fy!*
And the least smutty jest will ne'er pass by.
But city damsel ne'er had confidence
At smutty play to take the least offence,
But mercy shows, to show her innocence.
Yet lest the merchants' daughters should to-day
Be scandalised, not at our harmless play
But our Hippolita, since she's like one
Of us bold flirts of t'other end o'th' town;
Our poet sending to you (though unknown)
His best respects by me, does frankly own
The character to be unnatural;
Hippolita is not like you at all:
You, while your lovers court you, still look grum,
And far from wooing, when they woo, cry mum;
And if some of you e'er were stolen away,
Your portion's fault 'twas only, I dare say.
Thus much for him the poet bid me speak;
Now to the men I my own mind will break.
You good men o'th' Exchange, on whom alone
We must depend, when sparks to sea are gone;
Into the pit already you are come,
'Tis but a step more to our tiring room;
Where none of us but will be wondrous sweet
Upon an able love of Lombard-street.
You we had rather see between our scenes,
Than spendthrift fops with better clothes and miens;
Instead of laced coats, belts, and pantaloons,
Your velvet jumps, gold chains, and grave fur gowns;
Instead of periwigs, and broad cock'd hats,
Your satin caps, small cuffs, and vast cravats.
For you are fair and square in all your dealings,
You never cheat your doxies with gilt shillings;
You ne'er will break our windows; then you are
Fit to make love, while our huzzas make war;
And since all gentlemen must pack to sea,
Our gallants and our judges you must be:
We, therefore, and our poet, do submit,
To all the camlet cloaks now i'the pit.

THE COUNTRY WIFE.

A Comedy.

Indignor quidquam reprehendi, non quia crasse
Compositum illepideve putetur, sed quia nuper:
Nec veniam antiquis, sed honorem et præmia posci.—HORAT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MR. HORNER.
MR. HARCOURT.
MR. DORILANT.
MR. PINCHWIFE.
MR. SPARKISH.
SIR JASPER FIDGET.
A Boy.
A Quack.

MRS. MARGERY PINCHWIFE.
MRS. ALITHEA.
MY LADY FIDGET.
MRS. DAINTY FIDGET.
MRS. SQUEAMISH.
OLD LADY SQUEAMISH.
LUCY, ALITHEA'S *Maid.*
Waiters, Servants, *and* Attendants.

SCENE,—LONDON.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. HART.

POETS, like cudgell'd bullies, never do
At first or second blow submit to you;
But will provoke you still, and ne'er have done,
Till you are weary first with laying on.
The late so baffled scribbler of this day,
Though he stands trembling, bids me boldly say,
What we before most plays are used to do,
For poets out of fear first draw on you;
In a fierce prologue the still pit defy,
And, ere you speak, like Castril give the lie.
But though our Bays's battles oft I've fought,
And with bruised knuckles their dear conquests bought;
Nay, never yet fear'd odds upon the stage,
In prologue dare not hector with the age;
But would take quarter from your saving hands,
Though Bays within all yielding countermands,
Says, you confederate wits no quarter give,
Therefore his play shan't ask your leave to live.
Well, let the vain rash fop, by huffing so,
Think to obtain the better terms of you;
But we, the actors, humbly will submit,
Now, and at any time, to a full pit;
Nay, often we anticipate your rage,
And murder poets for you on our stage:
We set no guards upon our tiring-room,
But when with flying colours there you come,
We patiently, you see, give up to you
Our poets, virgins, nay, our matrons too.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—HORNER'S *Lodging.*

Enter HORNER, *and* QUACK *following him at a distance.*

Horn. [*Aside.*] A quack is as fit for a pimp, as a midwife for a bawd; they are still but in their way, both helpers of nature.—[*Aloud.*] Well, my dear doctor, hast thou done what I desired?

Quack. I have undone you for ever with the women, and reported you throughout the whole town as bad as a eunuch, with as much trouble as if I had made you one in earnest.

Horn. But have you told all the midwives you know, the orange wenches at the playhouses, the city husbands, and old fumbling keepers of this end of the town? for they'll be the readiest to report it.

Quack. I have told all the chambermaids, waiting-women, tire-women, and old women of my acquaintance; nay, and whispered it as a secret to 'em, and to the whisperers of Whitehall; so that you need not doubt 'twill spread, and you will be as odious to the handsome young women, as—

Horn. As the small-pox. Well—

Quack. And to the married women of this end of the town, as—

Horn. As the great ones; nay, as their own husbands.

Quack. And to the city dames, as aniseed Robin, of filthy and contemptible memory; and they will frighten their children with your name, especially their females.

Horn. And cry, Horner's coming to carry you away. I am only afraid 'twill not be believed. You told 'em it was by an English-French disaster, and an English-French chirurgeon, who has given me at once not only a cure, but an antidote for the future against that damned malady, and that worse distemper, love, and all other women's evils?

Quack. Your late journey into France has made it the more credible, and your being here a fortnight before you appeared in public, looks as if you apprehended the shame, which I wonder you do not. Well, I have been hired by young gallants to belie 'em t'other way; but you are the first would be thought a man unfit for women.

Horn. Dear Mr. doctor, let vain rogues be contented only to be thought abler men than they are, generally 'tis all the pleasure they have; but mine lies another way.

Quack. You take, methinks, a very preposterous way to it, and as ridiculous as if we operators in physic should put forth bills to disparage our medicaments, with hopes to gain customers.

Horn. Doctor, there are quacks in love as well as physic, who get but the fewer and worse patients for their boasting; a good name is seldom got by giving it one's self; and women, no more than honour, are compassed by bragging. Come, come, doctor, the wisest lawyer never discovers the merits of his cause till the trial; the wealthiest man conceals his riches, and the cunning gamester his play. Shy husbands and keepers, like old rooks, are not to be cheated but by a new unpractised trick: false friendship will now no more than false dice upon 'em; no, not in the city.

Enter Boy.

Boy. There are two ladies and a gentleman coming up. [*Exit.*

Horn. A pox! some unbelieving sisters of my former acquaintance, who, I am afraid, expect their sense should be satisfied of the falsity of the report. No—this formal fool and women!

Enter Sir Jasper Fidget, Lady Fidget, *and* Mrs. Dainty Fidget.

Quack. His wife and sister.

Sir Jasp. My coach breaking just now before your door, sir, I look upon as an occasional reprimand to me, sir, for not kissing your hands, sir, since your coming out of France, sir; and so my disaster, sir, has been my good fortune, sir; and this is my wife and sister, sir.

Horn. What then, sir?

Sir Jasp. My lady, and sister, sir.—Wife, this is master Horner.

Lady Fidg. Master Horner, husband!

Sir Jasp. My lady, my lady Fidget, sir.

Horn. So, sir.

Sir Jasp. Won't you be acquainted with her, sir?—[*Aside.*] So, the report is true, I find, by his coldness or aversion to the sex; but I'll play the wag with him.—[*Aloud.*] Pray salute my wife, my lady, sir.

Horn. I will kiss no man's wife, sir, for him, sir; I have taken my eternal leave, sir, of the sex already, sir.

Sir Jasp. [*Aside.*] Ha! ha! ha! I'll plague him yet.—[*Aloud.*] Not know my wife, sir?

Horn. I do know your wife, sir; she's a woman, sir, and consequently a monster, sir, a greater monster than a husband, sir.

Sir Jasp. A husband! how, sir?

Horn. So, sir; but I make no more cuckolds, sir. [*Makes horns.*

Sir Jasp. Ha! ha! ha! Mercury! Mercury!

Lady Fidg. Pray, sir Jasper, let us be gone from this rude fellow.

Dain. Who, by his breeding, would think he had ever been in France?

Lady Fidg. Foh! he's but too much a French fellow, such as hate women of quality and virtue for their love to their husbands. Sir Jasper, a woman is hated by 'em as much for loving her husband as for loving their money. But pray let's be gone.

Horn. You do well, madam; for I have nothing that you came for. I have brought over not so much as a bawdy picture, no new postures, nor the second part of the *Ecole des Filles*; nor—

Quack. Hold, for shame, sir! what d'ye mean? you'll ruin yourself for ever with the sex— [*Apart to* Horner.

Sir Jasp. Ha! ha! ha! he hates women perfectly, I find.

Dain. What pity 'tis he should!

Lady Fidg. Ay, he's a base rude fellow for't. But affectation makes not a woman more odious to them than virtue.

Horn. Because your virtue is your greatest affectation, madam.

Lady Fidg. How, you saucy fellow! would you wrong my honour?

Horn. If I could.

Lady Fidg. How d'ye mean, sir?

Sir Jasp. Ha! ha! ha! no, he can't wrong your ladyship's honour, upon my honour. He, poor man—hark you in your ear—a mere eunuch. [*Whispers.*

Lady Fidg. O filthy French beast! foh! foh! why do we stay? let's be gone: I can't endure the sight of him.

Sir Jasp. Stay but till the chairs come; they'll be here presently.

Lady Fidg. No, no.

Sir Jasp. Nor can I stay longer. 'Tis, let me see, a quarter and half quarter of a minute past eleven. The council will be set; I must away. Business must be preferred always before love and ceremony with the wise, Mr. Horner.

Horn. And the impotent, sir Jasper.

Sir Jasp. Ay, ay, the impotent, master Horner; hah! hah! hah!

Lady Fidg. What, leave us with a filthy man alone in his lodgings?

Sir Jasp. He's an innocent man now, you know. Pray stay, I'll hasten the chairs to you.—Mr. Horner, your servant; I should be glad to see you at my house. Pray come and dine with me, and play at cards with my wife after dinner; you are fit for women at that game yet, ha! ha!—

[*Aside.*] 'Tis as much a husband's prudence to provide innocent diversion for a wife as to hinder her unlawful pleasures; and he had better employ her than let her employ herself.—[*Aloud.*] Farewell.

Horn. Your servant, sir Jasper. [*Exit* SIR JASPER.

Lady Fidg. I will not stay with him, foh!—

Horn. Nay, madam, I beseech you stay, if it be but to see I can be as civil to ladies yet as they would desire.

Lady Fidg. No, no, foh! you cannot be civil to ladies.

Dain. You as civil as ladies would desire?

Lady Fidg. No, no, no, foh! foh! foh!

[*Exeunt* LADY FIDGET *and* MRS. DAINTY FIDGET.

Quack. Now, I think, I, or you yourself rather, have done your business with the women.

Horn. Thou art an ass. Don't you see already, upon the report and my carriage, this grave man of business leaves his wife in my lodgings, invites me to his house and wife, who before would not be acquainted with me out of jealousy?

Quack. Nay, by this means you may be the more acquainted with the husbands, but the less with the wives.

Horn. Let me alone; if I can but abuse the husbands, I'll soon disabuse the wives. Stay—I'll reckon you up the advantages I am like to have by my stratagem. First, I shall be rid of all my old acquaintances, the most insatiable sort of duns, that invade our lodgings in a morning; and next to the pleasure of making a new mistress is that of being rid of an old one, and of all old debts. Love, when it comes to be so, is paid the most unwillingly.

Quack. Well, you may be so rid of your old acquaintances; but how will you get any new ones?

Horn. Doctor, thou wilt never make a good chemist, thou art so incredulous and impatient. Ask but all the young fellows of the town if they do not lose more time, like huntsmen, in starting the game, than in running it down. One knows not where to find 'em; who will or will not. Women of quality are so civil, you can hardly distinguish love from good breeding, and a man is often mistaken: but now I can be sure she that shows an aversion to me loves the sport, as those women that are gone, whom I warrant to be right. And then the next thing is, your women of honour, as you call 'em, are only chary of their reputations, not their persons; and 'tis scandal they would avoid, not men. Now may I have, by the reputation of a eunuch, the privileges of one, and be seen in a lady's chamber in a morning as early as her husband; kiss virgins before their parents or lovers; and may be, in short, the *pars-par-tout* of the town. Now, doctor.

Quack. Nay, now you shall be the doctor; and your process is so new that we do not know but it may succeed.

Horn. Not so new neither; *probatum est*, doctor.

Quack. Well, I wish you luck, and many patients, whilst I go to mine. [*Exit.*

Enter HARCOURT *and* DORILANT.

Har. Come, your appearance at the play yesterday has, I hope, hardened you for the future against the women's contempt and the men's raillery; and now you'll abroad as you were wont.

Horn. Did I not bear it bravely?

Dor. With a most theatrical impudence, nay, more than the orange-wenches show there, or a drunken vizard-mask, or a great-bellied actress; nay, or the most impudent of creatures, an ill poet; or what is yet more impudent, a second-hand critic.

Horn. But what say the ladies? have they no pity?

Har. What ladies? The vizard-masks, you know, never pity a man when all's gone, though in their service.

Dor. And for the women in the boxes, you'd never pity them when 'twas in your power.

Har. They say 'tis pity but all that deal with common women should be served so.

Dor. Nay, I dare swear they won't admit you to play at cards with them, go to plays with 'em, or do the little duties which other shadows of men are wont to do for 'em.

Horn. Who do you call shadows of men?

Dor. Half-men.

Horn. What, boys?

Dor. Ay, your old boys, old *beaux garçons*, who, like superannuated stallions, are suffered to run, feed, and whinny with the mares as long as they live, though they can do nothing else.

Horn. Well, a pox on love and wenching! Women serve but to keep a man from better company. Though I can't enjoy them, I shall you the more. Good fellowship and friendship are lasting, rational, and manly pleasures.

Har. For all that, give me some of those pleasures you call effeminate too; they help to relish one another.

Horn. They disturb one another.

Har. No, mistresses are like books. If you pore upon them too much, they doze you, and make you unfit for company; but if used discreetly, you are the fitter for conversation by 'em.

Dor. A mistress should be like a little country retreat near the town; not to dwell in constantly, but only for a night and away, to taste the town the better when a man returns.

Horn. I tell you, 'tis as hard to be a good fellow, a good friend, and a lover of women, as 'tis to be a good fellow, a good friend, and a lover of money. You cannot follow both, then choose your side. Wine gives you liberty, love takes it away.

Dor. Gad, he's in the right on't.

Horn. Wine gives you joy; love, grief and tortures, besides surgeons. Wine makes us witty; love, only sots. Wine makes us sleep; love breaks it.

Dor. By the world he has reason, Harcourt.

Horn. Wine makes—

Dor. Ay, wine makes us—makes us princes; love makes us beggars, poor rogues, egad—and wine—

Horn. So, there's one converted.—No, no, love and wine, oil and vinegar.

Har. I grant it; love will still be uppermost.

Horn. Come, for my part, I will have only those glorious manly pleasures of being very drunk and very slovenly.

Enter Boy.

Boy. Mr. Sparkish is below, sir. [*Exit.*

Har. What, my dear friend! a rogue that is fond of me only, I think, for abusing him.

Dor. No, he can no more think the men laugh at him than that women jilt him; his opinion of himself is so good.

Horn. Well, there's another pleasure by drinking I thought not of,—I shall lose his acquaintance, because he cannot drink: and you know 'tis a very hard thing to be rid of him; for he's one of those nauseous offerers at wit, who, like the worst fiddlers, run themselves into all companies.

Har. One that, by being in the company of men of sense, would pass for one.

Horn. And may so to the short-sighted world; as a false jewel amongst true ones is not discerned at a distance. His company is as troublesome to us as a cuckold's when you have a mind to his wife's.

Har. No, the rogue will not let us enjoy one another, but ravishes our conversation; though he signifies no more to't than sir Martin Marall's gaping, and awkward thrumming upon the lute, does to his man's voice and music.

Dor. And to pass for a wit in town shows himself a fool every night to us, that are guilty of the plot.

Horn. Such wits as he are, to a company of reasonable men, like rooks to the gamesters; who only fill a room at the table, but are so far from contributing to the play, that they only serve to spoil the fancy of those that do.

Dor. Nay, they are used like rooks too, snubbed, checked, and abused; yet the rogues will hang on.

Horn. A pox on 'em, and all that force nature, and would be still what she forbids 'em! Affectation is her greatest monster.

Har. Most men are the contraries to that they would seem. Your bully, you see, is a coward with a long sword; the little humbly-fawning physician, with his ebony cane, is he that destroys men.

Dor. The usurer, a poor rogue, possessed of mouldy bonds and mortgages; and we they call spendthrifts, are only wealthy, who lay out his money upon daily new purchases of pleasure.

Horn. Ay, your arrantest cheat is your trustee or executor; your jealous man, the greatest cuckold; your churchman the greatest atheist; and your noisy pert rogue of a wit, the greatest fop, dullest ass, and worst company, as you shall see; for here he comes.

Enter SPARKISH.

Spark. How is't, sparks? how is't? Well, faith, Harry, I must rally thee a little, ha! ha! ha! upon the report in town of thee, ha! ha! ha! I can't hold i'faith; shall I speak?

Horn. Yes; but you'll be so bitter then.

Spark. Honest Dick and Frank here shall answer for me; I will not be extreme bitter, by the universe.

Har. We will be bound in a ten thousand pound bond, he shall not be bitter at all.

Dor. Nor sharp, nor sweet.

Horn. What, not downright insipid?

Spark. Nay then, since you are so brisk, and provoke me, take what follows. You must know, I was discoursing and rallying with some ladies yesterday, and they happened to talk of the fine new signs in town—

Horn. Very fine ladies, I believe.

Spark. Said I, I know where the best new sign is.—Where? says one of the ladies.—In Covent-Garden, I replied.—Said another, In what street?—In Russel-street, answered I.—Lord, says another, I'm sure there was never a fine new sign there yesterday.—Yes, but there was, said I again; and it came out of France, and has been there a fortnight.

Dor. A pox! I can hear no more, prithee.

Horn. No, hear him out; let him tune his crowd a while.

Har. The worst music, the greatest preparation.

Spark. Nay, faith, I'll make you laugh.—It cannot be, says a third lady.—Yes, yes, quoth I again.—Says a fourth lady—

Horn. Look to't, we'll have no more ladies.

Spark. No—then mark, mark, now. Said I to the fourth, Did you never see Mr. Horner? he lodges in Russel-street, and he's a sign of a man, you know, since he came out of France; ha! ha! ha!

Horn. But the devil take me if thine be the sign of a jest.

Spark. With that they all fell a-laughing, till they bepissed themselves. What, but it does not move you, methinks? Well, I see one had as good go to law without a witness, as break a jest without a laughter on one's side.—Come, come, sparks, but where do we dine? I have left at Whitehall an earl, to dine with you.

Dor. Why, I thought thou hadst loved a man with a title, better than a suit with a French trimming to't.

Har. Go to him again.

Spark. No, sir, a wit to me is the greatest title in the world.

Horn. But go dine with your earl, sir; he may be exceptious. We are your friends, and will not take it ill to be left, I do assure you.

Har. Nay, faith, he shall go to him.

Spark. Nay, pray, gentlemen.

Dor. We'll thrust you out, if you won't; what, disappoint anybody for us?

Spark. Nay, dear gentlemen, hear me.

Horn. No, no, sir, by no means; pray go, sir.

Spark. Why, dear rogues—

Dor. No, no. [*They all thrust him out of the room.*

All. Ha! ha! ha!

Re-enter SPARKISH.

Spark. But, sparks, pray hear me. What, d'ye think I'll eat then with gay shallow fops and silent coxcombs? I think wit as necessary at dinner, as a glass of good wine; and that's the reason I never have any stomach when I eat alone.—Come, but where do we dine?

Horn. Even where you will.

Spark. At Chateline's?

Dor. Yes, if you will.

Spark. Or at the Cock?

Dor. Yes, if you please.

Spark. Or at the Dog and Partridge?

Horn. Ay, if you have a mind to't; for we shall dine at neither.

Spark. Pshaw! with your fooling we shall lose the new play; and I would no more miss seeing a new play the first day, than I would miss sitting in the wits' row. Therefore I'll go fetch my mistress, and away. [*Exit.*

Enter MR. PINCHWIFE.

Horn. Who have we here? Pinchwife?

Pinch. Gentlemen, your humble servant.

Horn. Well, Jack, by thy long absence from the

town, the grumness of thy countenance, and the slovenliness of thy habit, I should give thee joy, should I not, of marriage?

Pinch. [*Aside.*] Death! does he know I'm married too? I thought to have concealed it from him at least.—[*Aloud.*] My long stay in the country will excuse my dress; and I have a suit of law that brings me up to town, that puts me out of humour. Besides, I must give Sparkish to-morrow five thousand pounds to lie with my sister.

Horn. Nay, you country gentlemen, rather than not purchase, will buy anything; and he is a cracked title, if we may quibble. Well, but am I to give thee joy? I heard thou wert married.

Pinch. What then?

Horn. Why, the next thing that is to be heard, is, thou'rt a cuckold.

Pinch. Insupportable name! [*Aside.*

Horn. But I did not expect marriage from such a whoremaster as you; one that knew the town so much, and women so well.

Pinch. Why, I have married no London wife.

Horn. Pshaw! that's all one. That grave circumspection in marrying a country wife, is like refusing a deceitful pampered Smithfield jade, to go and be cheated by a friend in the country.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] A pox on him and his simile!—[*Aloud.*] At least we are a little surer of the breed there, know what her keeping has been, whether foiled or unsound.

Horn. Come, come, I have known a clap gotten in Wales; and there are cousins, justices' clerks, and chaplains in the country, I won't say coachmen. But she's handsome and young?

Pinch. [*Aside.*] I'll answer as I should do.—[*Aloud.*] No, no; she has no beauty but her youth, no attraction but her modesty: wholesome, homely, and huswifely; that's all.

Dor. He talks as like a grazier as he looks.

Pinch. She's too awkward, ill-favoured, and silly to bring to town.

Har. Then methinks you should bring her to be taught breeding.

Pinch. To be taught! no, sir, I thank you. Good wives and private soldiers should be ignorant—I'll keep her from your instructions, I warrant you.

Har. The rogue is as jealous as if his wife were not ignorant. [*Aside.*

Horn. Why, if she be ill-favoured, there will be less danger here for you than by leaving her in the country. We have such variety of dainties that we are seldom hungry.

Dor. But they have always coarse, constant, swingeing stomachs in the country.

Har. Foul feeders indeed!

Dor. And your hospitality is great there.

Har. Open house; every man's welcome.

Pinch. So, so, gentlemen.

Horn. But prithee, why shouldst thou marry her? If she be ugly, ill-bred, and silly, she must be rich then.

Pinch. As rich as if she brought me twenty thousand pound out of this town; for she'll be as sure not to spend her moderate portion, as a London baggage would be to spend hers, let it be what it would: so 'tis all one. Then, because she's ugly, she's the likelier to be my own; and being ill-bred, she'll hate conversation; and since silly and innocent, will not know the difference betwixt a man of one-and-twenty and one of forty.

Horn. Nine—to my knowledge. But if she be silly, she'll expect as much from a man of forty-nine, as from him of one-and-twenty. But methinks wit is more necessary than beauty; and I think no young woman ugly that has it, and no handsome woman agreeable without it.

Pinch. 'Tis my maxim, he's a fool that marries; but he's a greater that does not marry a fool. What is wit in a wife good for, but to make a man a cuckold?

Horn. Yes, to keep it from his knowledge.

Pinch. A fool cannot contrive to make her husband a cuckold.

Horn. No; but she'll club with a man that can: and what is worse, if she cannot make her husband a cuckold, she'll make him jealous, and pass for one: and then 'tis all one.

Pinch. Well, well, I'll take care for one. My wife shall make me no cuckold, though she had your help, Mr. Horner. I understand the town, sir.

Dor. His help! [*Aside.*

Har. He's come newly to town, it seems, and has not heard how things are with him. [*Aside.*

Horn. But tell me, has marriage cured thee of whoring, which it seldom does?

Har. 'Tis more than age can do.

Horn. No, the word is, I'll marry and live honest: but a marriage vow is like a penitent gamester's oath, and entering into bonds and penalties to stint himself to such a particular small sum at play for the future, which makes him but the more eager; and not being able to hold out, loses his money again, and his forfeit to boot.

Dor. Ay, ay, a gamester will be a gamester whilst his money lasts, and a whoremaster whilst his vigour.

Har. Nay, I have known 'em, when they are broke, and can lose no more, keep a fumbling with the box in their hands to fool with only, and hinder other gamesters.

Dor. That had wherewithal to make lusty stakes.

Pinch. Well, gentlemen, you may laugh at me; but you shall never lie with my wife: I know the town.

Horn. But prithee, was not the way you were in better? is not keeping better than marriage?

Pinch. A pox on't! the jades would jilt me, I could never keep a whore to myself.

Horn. So, then you only married to keep a whore to yourself. Well, but let me tell you, women, as you say, are like soldiers, made constant and loyal by good pay, rather than by oaths and covenants. Therefore I'd advise my friends to keep rather than marry, since too I find, by your example, it does not serve one's turn; for I saw you yesterday in the eighten-penny place with a pretty country-wench.

Pinch. How the devil! did he see my wife then? I sat there that she might not be seen. But she shall never go to a play again. [*Aside.*

Horn. What! dost thou blush, at nine-and-forty, for having been seen with a wench?

Dor. No, faith, I warrant 'twas his wife, which he seated there out of sight; for he's a cunning rogue, and understands the town.

Har. He blushes. Then 'twas his wife; for men are now more ashamed to be seen with them in public than with a wench.

Pinch. Hell and damnation! I'm undone, since Horner has seen her, and they know 'twas she. [*Aside.*

Horn. But prithee, was it thy wife? She was exceeding pretty: I was in love with her at that distance.

Pinch. You are like never to be nearer to her. Your servant, gentlemen. [*Offers to go.*

Horn. Nay, prithee stay.

Pinch. I cannot; I will not.

Horn. Come, you shall dine with us.

Pinch. I have dined already.

Horn. Come, I know thou hast not: I'll treat thee, dear rogue; thou sha't spend none of thy Hampshire money to-day.

Pinch. Treat me! So, he uses me already like his cuckold. [*Aside.*

Horn. Nay, you shall not go.

Pinch. I must; I have business at home. [*Exit.*

Har. To beat his wife. He's as jealous of her, as a Cheapside husband of a Covent-garden wife.

Horn. Why, 'tis as hard to find an old whoremaster without jealousy and the gout, as a young one without fear, or the pox:—

As gout in age from pox in youth proceeds,
So wenching past, then jealousy succeeds;
The worst disease that love and wenching breeds. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* PINCHWIFE's *House.*

MRS. MARGERY PINCHWIFE *and* ALITHEA. MR. PINCHWIFE *peeping behind at the door.*

Mrs. Pinch. Pray, sister, where are the best fields and woods to walk in, in London?

Alith. [*Aside.*] A pretty question!—[*Aloud.*] Why, sister, Mulberry-garden and St. James's-park; and, for close walks, the New Exchange.

Mrs. Pinch. Pray, sister, tell me why my husband looks so grum here in town, and keeps me up so close, and will not let me go a-walking, nor let me wear my best gown yesterday.

Alith. O, he's jealous, sister.

Mrs. Pinch. Jealous! what's that?

Alith. He's afraid you should love another man.

Mrs. Pinch. How should he be afraid of my loving another man, when he will not let me see any but himself?

Alith. Did he not carry you yesterday to a play?

Mrs. Pinch. Ay; but we sat amongst ugly people. He would not let me come near the gentry, who sat under us, so that I could not see 'em. He told me, none but naughty women sat there, whom they toused and moused. But I would have ventured, for all that.

Alith. But how did you like the play?

Mrs. Pinch. Indeed I was weary of the play; but I liked hugeously the actors. They are the goodliest, properest men, sister!

Alith. O, but you must not like the actors, sister.

Mrs. Pinch. Ay, how should I help it, sister? Pray, sister, when my husband comes in, will you ask leave for me to go a-walking?

Alith. A-walking! ha! ha! Lord, a country-gentlewoman's pleasure is the drudgery of a footpost; and she requires as much airing as her husband's horses.—[*Aside.*] But here comes your husband: I'll ask, though I'm sure he'll not grant it.

Mrs. Pinch. He says he won't let me go abroad for fear of catching the pox.

Alith. Fy! the small-pox you should say.

Enter PINCHWIFE.

Mrs. Pinch. O my dear, dear bud, welcome home! Why dost thou look so fropish? who has angered thee?

Pinch. You're a fool.

[MRS. PINCHWIFE *goes aside, and cries.*

Alith. Faith, so she is, for crying for no fault, poor tender creature!

Pinch. What, you would have her as impudent as yourself, as arrant a jilflirt, a gadder, a magpie; and to say all, a mere notorious town-woman?

Alith. Brother, you are my only censurer; and the honour of your family will sooner suffer in your wife there than in me, though I take the innocent liberty of the town.

Pinch. Hark you, mistress, do not talk so before my wife.—The innocent liberty of the town!

Alith. Why, pray, who boasts of any intrigue with me? what lampoon has made my name notorious? what ill women frequent my lodgings? I keep no company with any women of scandalous reputations.

Pinch. No, you keep the men of scandalous reputations company.

Alith. Where? would you not have me civil? answer 'em in a box at the plays, in the drawing-room at Whitehall, in St. James's-park, Mulberry-garden, or—

Pinch. Hold, hold! do not teach my wife where the men are to be found: I believe she's the worse for your town-documents already. I bid you keep her in ignorance, as I do.

Mrs. Pinch. Indeed, be not angry with her, bud, she will tell me nothing of the town, though I ask her a thousand times a day.

Pinch. Then you are very inquisitive to know, I find?

Mrs. Pinch. Not I indeed, dear; I hate London. Our place-house in the country is worth a thousand of't: would I were there again!

Pinch. So you shall, I warrant. But were you not talking of plays and players when I came in?—[*To* ALITHEA.] You are her encourager in such discourses.

Mrs. Pinch. No, indeed, dear; she chid me just now for liking the playermen.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] Nay, if she be so innocent as to own to me her liking them, there is no hurt in't.—[*Aloud.*] Come, my poor rogue, but thou likest none better than me?

Mrs. Pinch. Yes, indeed, but I do. The playermen are finer folks.

Pinch. But you love none better than me?

Mrs. Pinch. You are my own dear bud, and I know you. I hate a stranger.

Pinch. Ay, my dear, you must love me only; and not be like the naughty town-women, who only hate their husbands, and love every man else; love plays, visits, fine coaches, fine clothes, fiddles, balls, treats, and so lead a wicked town-life.

Mrs. Pinch. Nay, if to enjoy all these things be a town-life, London is not so bad a place, dear.

Pinch. How! if you love me, you must hate London.

Alith. The fool has forbid me discovering to her the pleasures of the town, and he is now setting her agog upon them himself. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Pinch. But, husband, do the town-women love the playermen too?

Pinch. Yes, I warrant you.

Mrs. Pinch. Ay, I warrant you.

Pinch. Why, you do not, I hope?

Mrs. Pinch. No, no, bud. But why have we no playermen in the country?

Pinch. Ha!—Mrs. Minx, ask me no more to go to a play.

Mrs. Pinch. Nay, why, love? I did not care for going: but when you forbid me, you make me, as 'twere, desire it.

Alith. So 'twill be in other things, I warrant. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Pinch. Pray let me go to a play, dear.

Pinch. Hold your peace, I wo' not.

Mrs. Pinch. Why, love?

Pinch. Why, I'll tell you.

Alith. Nay, if he tell her, she'll give him more cause to forbid her that place. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Pinch. Pray why, dear?

Pinch. First, you like the actors; and the gallants may like you.

Mrs. Pinch. What, a homely country girl! No, bud, nobody will like me.

Pinch. I tell you yes, they may.

Mrs. Pinch. No, no, you jest—I won't believe you: I will go.

Pinch. I tell you then, that one of the lewdest fellows in town, who saw you there, told me he was in love with you.

Mrs. Pinch. Indeed! who, who, pray who was't?

Pinch. I've gone too far, and slipped before I was aware; how overjoyed she is! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Pinch. Was it any Hampshire gallant, any of our neighbours? I promise you, I am beholden to him.

Pinch. I promise you, you lie; for he would but ruin you, as he has done hundreds. He has no other love for women but that; such as he look upon women, like basilisks, only to destroy 'em.

Mrs. Pinch. Ay, but if he loves me, why should he ruin me? answer me to that. Methinks he should not, I would do him no harm.

Alith. Ha! ha! ha!

Pinch. 'Tis very well; but I'll keep him from doing you any harm, or me either. But here comes company; get you in, get you in.

Mrs. Pinch. But pray, husband, is he a pretty gentleman that loves me?

Pinch. In, baggage, in.

[*Thrusts her in, and shuts the door.*

Enter Sparkish *and* Harcourt.

What, all the lewd libertines of the town brought to my lodging by this easy coxcomb! 'sdeath, I'll not suffer it.

Spark. Here, Harcourt, do you approve my choice?—[*To* Alithea.] Dear little rogue, I told you I'd bring you acquainted with all my friends, the wits and— [Harcourt *salutes her.*

Pinch. Ay, they shall know her, as well as you yourself will, I warrant you.

Spark. This is one of those, my pretty rogue, that are to dance at your wedding to-morrow; and him you must bid welcome ever, to what you and I have.

Pinch. Monstrous! [*Aside.*

Spark. Harcourt, how dost thou like her, faith? Nay, dear, do not look down; I should hate to have a wife of mine out of countenance at anything.

Pinch. Wonderful! [*Aside.*

Spark. Tell me, I say, Harcourt, how dost thou like her? Thou hast stared upon her enough, to resolve me.

Har. So infinitely well, that I could wish I had a mistress too, that might differ from her in nothing but her love and engagement to you.

Alith. Sir, master Sparkish has often told me that his acquaintance were all wits and raillieurs, and now I find it.

Spark. No, by the universe, madam, he does not rally now; you may believe him. I do assure you, he is the honestest, worthiest, true-hearted gentleman—a man of such perfect honour, he would say nothing to a lady he does not mean.

Pinch. Praising another man to his mistress! [*Aside.*

Har. Sir, you are so beyond expectation obliging, that—

Spark. Nay, egad, I am sure you do admire her extremely; I see't in your eyes.—He does admire you, madam.—By the world, don't you?

Har. Yes, above the world, or the most glorious part of it, her whole sex: and till now I never thought I should have envied you, or any man about to marry, but you have the best excuse for marriage I ever knew.

Alith. Nay, now, sir, I'm satisfied you are of the society of the wits and raillieurs, since you cannot spare your friend, even when he is but too civil to you; but the surest sign is, since you are an enemy to marriage,—for that I hear you hate as much as business or bad wine.

Har. Truly, madam, I was never an enemy to marriage till now, because marriage was never an enemy to me before.

Alith. But why, sir, is marriage an enemy to you now? because it robs you of your friend here? for you look upon a friend married, as one gone into a monastery, that is, dead to the world.

Har. 'Tis indeed, because you marry him; I see, madam, you can guess my meaning. I do confess heartily and openly, I wish it were in my power to break the match; by heavens I would.

Spark. Poor Frank!

Alith. Would you be so unkind to me?

Har. No, no, 'tis not because I would be unkind to you.

Spark. Poor Frank! no gad, 'tis only his kindness to me.

Pinch. Great kindness to you indeed! Insensible fop, let a man make love to his wife to his face! [*Aside.*

Spark. Come, dear Frank, for all my wife there, that shall be, thou shalt enjoy me sometimes, dear rogue. By my honour, we men of wit condole for our deceased brother in marriage, as much as for one dead in earnest: I think that was prettily said of me, ha, Harcourt?—But come, Frank, be not melancholy for me.

Har. No, I assure you, I am not melancholy for you.

Spark. Prithee, Frank, dost think my wife that shall be there, a fine person?

Har. I could gaze upon her till I became as blind as you are.

Spark. How as I am? how?

Har. Because you are a lover, and true lovers are blind, stock blind.

Spark. True, true; but by the world she has wit too, as well as beauty: go, go with her into a corner, and try if she has wit; talk to her anything, she's bashful before me.

Har. Indeed if a woman wants wit in a corner, she has it nowhere.

Alith. Sir, you dispose of me a little before your time— [*Aside to* SPARKISH.

Spark. Nay, nay, madam, let me have an earnest of your obedience, or—go, go, madam—

[HARCOURT *courts* ALITHEA *aside.*

Pinch. How, sir! if you are not concerned for the honour of a wife, I am for that of a sister; he shall not debauch her. Be a pander to your own wife! bring men to her! let 'em make love before your face! thrust 'em into a corner together, then leave 'em in private! Is this your town wit and conduct?

Spark. Ha! ha! ha! a silly wise rogue would make one laugh more than a stark fool, ha! ha! I shall burst. Nay, you shall not disturb 'em; I'll vex thee, by the world.

[*Struggles with* PINCHWIFE *to keep him from* HARCOURT *and* ALITHEA.

Alith. The writings are drawn, sir, settlements made; 'tis too late, sir, and past all revocation.

Har. Then so is my death.

Alith. I would not be unjust to him.

Har. Then why to me so?

Alith. I have no obligation to you.

Har. My love.

Alith. I had his before.

Har. You never had it; he wants, you see, jealousy, the only infallible sign of it.

Alith. Love proceeds from esteem; he cannot distrust my virtue: besides, he loves me, or he would not marry me.

Har. Marrying you is no more sign of his love than bribing your woman, that he may marry you, is a sign of his generosity. Marriage is rather a sign of interest than love; and he that marries a fortune covets a mistress, not loves her. But if you take marriage for a sign of love, take it from me immediately.

Alith. No, now you have put a scruple in my head; but in short, sir, to end our dispute, I must marry him, my reputation would suffer in the world else.

Har. No; if you do marry him, with your pardon, madam, your reputation suffers in the world, and you would be thought in necessity for a cloak.

Alith. Nay, now you are rude, sir.—Mr. Sparkish, pray come hither, your friend here is very troublesome, and very loving.

Har. Hold! hold!— [*Aside to* ALITHEA.

Pinch. D'ye hear that?

Spark. Why, d'ye think I'll seem to be jealous, like a country bumpkin?

Pinch. No, rather be a cuckold, like a credulous cit.

Har. Madam, you would not have been so little generous as to have told him.

Alith. Yes, since you could be so little generous as to wrong him.

Har. Wrong him! no man can do't, he's beneath an injury: a bubble, a coward, a senseless idiot, a wretch so contemptible to all the world but you, that—

Alith. Hold, do not rail at him, for since he is like to be my husband, I am resolved to like him: nay, I think I am obliged to tell him you are not his friend.—Master Sparkish, Master Sparkish!

Spark. What, what?—[*To* HARCOURT.] Now, dear rogue, has not she wit?

Har. Not so much as I thought, and hoped she had. [*Speaks surlily.*

Alith. Mr. Sparkish, do you bring people to rail at you?

Har. Madam—

Spark. How! no; but if he does rail at me, 'tis but in jest, I warrant: what we wits do for one another, and never take any notice of it.

Alith. He spoke so scurrilously of you, I had no patience to hear him; besides, he has been making love to me.

Har. True, damned tell-tale woman! [*Aside.*

Spark. Pshaw! to show his parts—we wits rail and make love often, but to show our parts: as we have no affections, so we have no malice, we—

Alith. He said you were a wretch below an injury—

Spark. Pshaw!

Har. Damned, senseless, impudent, virtuous jade! Well, since she won't let me have her, she'll do as good, she'll make me hate her. [*Aside.*

Alith. A common bubble—

Spark. Pshaw!

Alith. A coward—

Spark. Pshaw, pshaw!

Alith. A senseless, drivelling idiot—

Spark. How! did he disparage my parts? Nay, then, my honour's concerned, I can't put up that, sir, by the world—brother, help me to kill him.—[*Aside*] I may draw now, since we have the odds of him:—'tis a good occasion, too, before my mistress— [*Offers to draw.*

Alith. Hold, hold!

Spark. What, what?

Alith. [*Aside.*] I must not let 'em kill the gentleman neither, for his kindness to me: I am so far from hating him, that I wish my gallant had his person and understanding. Nay, if my honour—

Spark. I'll be thy death.

Alith. Hold, hold! Indeed, to tell the truth, the gentleman said after all, that what he spoke was but out of friendship to you.

Spark. How! say, I am, I am a fool, that is, no wit, out of friendship to me?

Alith. Yes, to try whether I was concerned

enough for you; and made love to me only to be satisfied of my virtue, for your sake.

Har. Kind, however. [*Aside.*

Spark. Nay, if it were so, my dear rogue, I ask thee pardon; but why would not you tell me so, faith?

Har. Because I did not think on't, faith.

Spark. Come, Horner does not come; Harcourt, let's be gone to the new play.—Come, madam.

Alith. I will not go, if you intend to leave me alone in the box, and run into the pit, as you use to do.

Spark. Pshaw! I'll leave Harcourt with you in the box to entertain you, and that's as good; if I sat in the box, I should be thought no judge but of trimmings.—Come away, Harcourt, lead her down.

[*Exeunt* SPARKISH, HARCOURT, *and* ALITHEA.

Pinch. Well, go thy ways, for the flower of the true town fops, such as spend their estates before they come to 'em, and are cuckolds before they're married. But let me go look to my own freehold. —How!

Enter my LADY FIDGET, MRS. DAINTY FIDGET, *and* MRS. SQUEAMISH.

Lady Fidg. Your servant, sir: where is your lady? We are come to wait upon her to the new play.

Pinch. New play!

Lady Fidg. And my husband will wait upon you presently.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] Damn your civility.—[*Aloud*] Madam, by no means; I will not see sir Jasper here, till I have waited upon him at home; nor shall my wife see you till she has waited upon your ladyship at your lodgings.

Lady Fidg. Now we are here, sir?

Pinch. No, madam.

Dain. Pray, let us see her.

Mrs. Squeam. We will not stir till we see her.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] A pox on you all!—[*Goes to the door, and returns.*] She has locked the door, and is gone abroad.

Lady Fidg. No, you have locked the door, and she's within.

Dain. They told us below she was here.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] Will nothing do?—[*Aloud.*] Well, it must out then. To tell you the truth, ladies, which I was afraid to let you know before, lest it might endanger your lives, my wife has just now the small-pox come out upon her; do not be frightened; but pray be gone, ladies; you shall not stay here in danger of your lives; pray get you gone, ladies.

Lady Fidg. No, no, we have all had 'em.

Mrs. Squeam. Alack, alack!

Dain. Come, come, we must see how it goes with her; I understand the disease.

Lady Fidg. Come!

Pinch. [*Aside.*] Well, there is no being too hard for women at their own weapon, lying, therefore I'll quit the field. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Squeam. Here's an example of jealousy!

Lady Fidg. Indeed, as the world goes, I wonder there are no more jealous, since wives are so neglected.

Dain. Pshaw! as the world goes, to what end should they be jealous?

Lady Fidg. Foh! 'tis a nasty world.

Mrs. Squeam. That men of parts, great acquaintance, and quality, should take up with and spend themselves and fortunes in keeping little playhouse creatures, foh!

Lady Fidg. Nay, that women of understanding, great acquaintance, and good quality, should fall a-keeping too of little creatures, foh!

Mrs. Squeam. Why, 'tis the men of quality's fault; they never visit women of honour and reputation as they used to do; and have not so much as common civility for ladies of our rank, but use us with the same indifferency and ill-breeding as if we were all married to 'em.

Lady Fidg. She says true; 'tis an arrant shame women of quality should be so slighted; methinks birth—birth should go for something; I have known men admired, courted, and followed for their titles only.

Mrs. Squeam. Ay, one would think men of honour should not love, no more than marry, out of their own rank.

Dain. Fy, fy upon 'em! they are come to think cross breeding for themselves best, as well as for their dogs and horses.

Lady Fidg. They are dogs and horses for't.

Mrs. Squeam. One would think, if not for love, for vanity a little.

Dain. Nay, they do satisfy their vanity upon us sometimes; and are kind to us in their report, tell all the world they lie with us.

Lady Fidg. Damned rascals, that we should be only wronged by 'em! To report a man has had a person, when he has not had a person, is the greatest wrong in the whole world that can be done to a person.

Mrs. Squeam. Well, 'tis an arrant shame noble persons should be so wronged and neglected.

Lady Fidg. But still 'tis an arranter shame for a noble person to neglect her own honour, and defame her own noble person with little inconsiderable fellows, foh!

Dain. I suppose the crime against our honour is the same with a man of quality as with another.

Lady Fidg. How! no sure, the man of quality is likest one's husband, and therefore the fault should be the less.

Dain. But then the pleasure should be the less.

Lady Fidg. Fy, fy, fy, for shame, sister! whither shall we ramble? Be continent in your discourse, or I shall hate you.

Dain. Besides, an intrigue is so much the more notorious for the man's quality.

Mrs. Squeam. 'Tis true nobody takes notice of a private man, and therefore with him 'tis more secret; and the crime's the less when 'tis not known.

Lady Fidg. You say true; i'faith, I think you are in the right on't: 'tis not an injury to a husband, till it be an injury to our honours; so that a woman of honour loses no honour with a private person; and to say truth—

Dain. So, the little fellow is grown a private person—with her— [*Apart to* MRS. SQUEAMISH.

Lady Fidg. But still my dear, dear honour—

Enter SIR JASPER FIDGET, HORNER, *and* DORILANT.

Sir Jasp. Ay, my dear, dear of honour, thou hast still so much honour in thy mouth—

Horn. That she has none elsewhere. [*Aside.*

Lady Fidg. Oh, what d'ye mean to bring in these upon us?

Dain. Foh! these are as bad as wits.

Mrs. Squeam. Foh!

Lady Fidg. Let us leave the room.

Sir Jasp. Stay, stay; faith, to tell you the naked truth—

Lady Fidg. Fy, Sir Jasper! do not use that word naked.

Sir Jasp. Well, well, in short I have business at Whitehall, and cannot go to the play with you, therefore would have you go—

Lady Fidg. With those two to a play?

Sir Jasp. No, not with t'other, but with Mr. Horner; there can be no more scandal to go with him than with Mr. Tatttle, or master Limberham.

Lady Fidg. With that nasty fellow! no—no.

Sir Jasp. Nay, prithee, dear, hear me.

[*Whispers to* LADY FIDGET.

Horn. Ladies—

[HORNER *and* DORILANT *draw near* MRS. SQUEAMISH *and* MRS. DAINTY FIDGET.

Dain. Stand off.

Mrs. Squeam. Do not approach us.

Dain. You herd with the wits, you are obscenity all over.

Mrs. Squeam. And I would as soon look upon a picture of Adam and Eve, without fig-leaves, as any of you, if I could help it; therefore keep off, and do not make us sick.

Dor. What a devil are these?

Horn. Why, these are pretenders to honour, as critics to wit, only by censuring others; and as every raw, peevish, out-of-humoured, affected, dull, tea-drinking, arithmetical fop, sets up for a wit by railing at men of sense, so these for honour, by railing at the court, and ladies of as great honour as quality.

Sir Jasp. Come, Mr. Horner, I must desire you to go with these ladies to the play, sir.

Horn. I, sir?

Sir Jasp. Ay, ay, come, sir.

Horn. I must beg your pardon, sir, and theirs; I will not be seen in women's company in public again for the world.

Sir Jasp. Ha, ha, strange aversion!

Mrs. Squeam. No, he's for women's company in private.

Sir Jasp. He—poor man—he—ha! ha! ha!

Dain. 'Tis a greater shame amongst lewd fellows to be seen in virtuous women's company, than for the women to be seen with them.

Horn. Indeed, madam, the time was I only hated virtuous women, but now I hate the other too; I beg your pardon, ladies.

Lady Fidg. You are very obliging, sir, because we would not be troubled with you.

Sir Jasp. In sober sadness, he shall go.

Dor. Nay, if he wo' not, I am ready to wait upon the ladies, and I think I am the fitter man.

Sir Jasp. You, sir! no, I thank you for that. Master Horner is a privileged man amongst the virtuous ladies, 'twill be a great while before you are so; he! he! he! he's my wife's gallant; he! he! he! No, pray withdraw, sir, for as I take it, the virtuous ladies have no business with you.

Dor. And I am sure he can have none with them. 'Tis strange a man can't come amongst virtuous women now, but upon the same terms as men are admitted into the Great Turk's seraglio. But heavens keep me from being an ombre player with 'em!—But where is Pinchwife? [*Exit.*

Sir Jasp. Come, come, man; what, avoid the sweet society of womankind? that sweet, soft, gentle, tame, noble creature, woman, made for man's companion—

Horn. So is that soft, gentle, tame, and more noble creature a spaniel, and has all their tricks; can fawn, lie down, suffer beating, and fawn the more; barks at your friends when they come to see you, makes your bed hard, gives you fleas, and the mange sometimes. And all the difference is, the spaniel's the more faithful animal, and fawns but upon one master.

Sir Jasp. He! he! he!

Mrs. Squeam. O the rude beast!

Dain. Insolent brute!

Lady Fidg. Brute! stinking, mortified, rotten French wether, to dare—

Sir Jasp. Hold, an't please your ladyship.—For shame, master Horner! your mother was a woman—[*Aside.*] Now shall I never reconcile 'em.—[*Aside to* LADY FIDGET.] Hark you, madam, take my advice in your anger. You know you often want one to make up your drolling pack of ombre players, and you may cheat him easily; for he's an ill gamester, and consequently loves play. Besides, you know you have but two old civil gentlemen (with stinking breaths too) to wait upon you abroad; take in the third into your service. The other are but crazy; and a lady should have a supernumerary gentleman-usher as a supernumerary coach-horse, lest sometimes you should be forced to stay at home.

Lady Fidg. But are you sure he loves play, and has money?

Sir Jasp. He loves play as much as you, and has money as much as I.

Lady Fidg. Then I am contented to make him pay for his scurrility. Money makes up in a measure all other wants in men.—Those whom we cannot make hold for gallants, we make fine. [*Aside.*

Sir Jasp. [*Aside*] So, so; now to mollify, to wheedle him.—[*Aside to* HORNER.] Master Horner, will you never keep civil company? methinks 'tis time now, since you are only fit for them. Come, come, man, you must e'en fall to visiting our wives, eating at our tables, drinking tea with our virtuous relations after dinner, dealing cards to 'em, reading plays and gazettes to 'em, picking fleas out of their smocks for 'em, collecting receipts, new songs, women, pages, and footmen for 'em.

Horn. I hope they'll afford me better employment, sir.

Sir Jasp. He! he! he! 'tis fit you know your work before you come into your place. And since you are unprovided of a lady to flatter, and a good house to eat at, pray frequent mine, and call my wife mistress, and she shall call you gallant, according to the custom.

Horn. Who, I?

Sir Jasp. Faith, thou sha't for my sake; come, for my sake only.

Horn. For your sake—

Sir Jasp. Come, come, here's a gamester for you; let him be a little familiar sometimes; nay, what if a little rude? Gamesters may be rude with ladies, you know.

Lady Fidg. Yes; losing gamesters have a privilege with women.

Horn. I always thought the contrary, that the winning gamester had most privilege with women;

for when you have lost your money to a man, you'll lose anything you have, all you have, they say, and he may use you as he pleases.

Sir Jasp. He! he! he! well, win or lose, you shall have your liberty with her.

Lady Fidg. As he behaves himself; and for your sake I'll give him admittance and freedom.

Horn. All sorts of freedom, madam?

Sir Jasp. Ay, ay, ay, all sorts of freedom thou canst take. And so go to her, begin thy new employment; wheedle her, jest with her, and be better acquainted one with another.

Horn. [*Aside.*] I think I know her already; therefore may venture with her my secret for hers.

[HORNER *and* Lady FIDGET *whisper.*

Sir Jasp. Sister cuz, I have provided an innocent playfellow for you there.

Dain. Who, he?

Mrs. Squeam. There's a playfellow, indeed!

Sir Jasp. Yes sure.—What, he is good enough to play at cards, blindman's-buff, or the fool with, sometimes!

Mrs. Squeam. Foh! we'll have no such playfellows.

Dain. No, sir; you shan't choose playfellows for us, we thank you.

Sir Jasp. Nay, pray hear me.

[*Whispering to them.*

Lady Fidg. But, poor gentleman, could you be so generous, so truly a man of honour, as for the sakes of us women of honour, to cause yourself to be reported no man? No man! and to suffer yourself the greatest shame that could fall upon a man, that none might fall upon us women by your conversation? but, indeed, sir, as perfectly, perfectly the same man as before your going into France, sir? as perfectly, perfectly, sir?

Horn. As perfectly, perfectly, madam. Nay, I scorn you should take my word; I desire to be tried only, madam.

Lady Fidg. Well, that's spoken again like a man of honour: all men of honour desire to come to the test. But, indeed, generally you men report such things of yourselves, one does not know how or whom to believe; and it is come to that pass, we dare not take your words no more than your tailor's, without some staid servant of yours be bound with you. But I have so strong a faith in your honour, dear, dear, noble sir, that I'd forfeit mine for yours at any time, dear sir.

Horn. No, madam, you should not need to forfeit it for me; I have given you security already to save you harmless, my late reputation being so well known in the world, madam.

Lady Fidg. But if upon any future falling-out, or upon a suspicion of my taking the trust out of your hands, to employ some other, you yourself should betray your trust, dear sir? I mean, if you'll give me leave to speak obscenely, you might tell, dear sir.

Horn. If I did, nobody would believe me. The reputation of impotency is as hardly recovered again in the world as that of cowardice, dear madam.

Lady Fidg. Nay, then, as one may say, you may do your worst, dear, dear sir.

Sir Jasp. Come, is your ladyship reconciled to him yet? have you agreed on matters? for I must be gone to Whitehall.

Lady Fidg. Why, indeed, sir Jasper, master Horner is a thousand, thousand times a better man than I thought him. Cousin Squeamish, sister Dainty, I can name him now. Truly, not long ago, you know, I thought his very name obscenity; and I would as soon have lain with him as have named him.

Sir Jasp. Very likely, poor madam.

Dain. I believe it.

Mrs. Squeam. No doubt on't.

Sir Jasp. Well, well—that your ladyship is as virtuous as any she, I know, and him all the town knows—he! he! he! therefore, now you like him, get you gone to your business together, go, go to your business, I say, pleasure, whilst I go to my pleasure, business.

Lady Fidg. Come, then, dear gallant.

Horn. Come away, my dearest mistress.

Sir Jasp. So, so; why, 'tis as I'd have it.

[*Exit.*

Horn. And as I'd have it.

Lady Fidg. Who for his business from his wife will run,
Takes the best care to have her business done.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* PINCHWIFE'S *House.*

Enter ALITHEA *and* MRS. PINCHWIFE.

Alith. Sister, what ails you? you are grown melancholy.

Mrs. Pinch. Would it not make any one melancholy to see you go every day fluttering about abroad, whilst I must stay at home like a poor, lonely, sullen bird in a cage?

Alith. Ay, sister; but you came young, and just from the nest to your cage: so that I thought you liked it, and could be as cheerful in't as others that took their flight themselves early, and are hopping abroad in the open air.

Mrs. Pinch. Nay, I confess I was quiet enough till my husband told me what pure lives the London ladies live abroad, with their dancing, meetings, and junketings, and dressed every day in their best gowns; and I warrant you, play at nine-pins every day of the week, so they do.

Enter MR. PINCHWIFE.

Pinch. Come, what's here to do? you are putting the town-pleasures in her head, and setting her a-longing.

Alith. Yes, after nine-pins. You suffer none to give her those longings you mean but yourself.

Pinch. I tell her of the vanities of the town like a confessor.

Alith. A confessor! just such a confessor as he that, by forbidding a silly hostler to grease the horse's teeth, taught him to do't.

Pinch. Come, Mrs. Flippant, good precepts are lost when bad examples are still before us: the

liberty you take abroad makes her hanker after it, and out of humour at home. Poor wretch! she desired not to come to London; I would bring her.

Alith. Very well.

Pinch. She has been this week in town, and never desired till this afternoon to go abroad.

Alith. Was she not at a play yesterday?

Pinch. Yes; but she ne'er asked me; I was myself the cause of her going.

Alith. Then if she ask you again, you are the cause of her asking, and not my example.

Pinch. Well, to-morrow night I shall be rid of you; and the next day, before 'tis light, she and I'll be rid of the town, and my dreadful apprehensions. —Come, be not melancholy; for thou sha't go into the country after to-morrow, dearest.

Alith. Great comfort!

Mrs. Pinch. Pish! what d'ye tell me of the country for?

Pinch. How's this! what, pish at the country?

Mrs. Pinch. Let me alone; I am not well.

Pinch. O, if that be all—what ails my dearest?

Mrs. Pinch. Truly, I don't know: but I have not been well since you told me there was a gallant at the play in love with me.

Pinch. Ha!—

Alith. That's by my example too!

Pinch. Nay, if you are not well, but are so concerned, because a lewd fellow chanced to lie, and say he liked you, you'll make me sick too.

Mrs. Pinch. Of what sickness?

Pinch. O, of that which is worse than the plague, jealousy.

Mrs. Pinch. Pish, you jeer! I'm sure there's no such disease in our receipt-book at home.

Pinch. No, thou never met'st with it, poor innocent.—Well, if thou cuckold me, 'twill be my own fault—for cuckolds and bastards are generally makers of their own fortune. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Pinch. Well, but pray, bud, let's go to a play to-night.

Pinch. 'Tis just done, she comes from it. But why are you so eager to see a play?

Mrs. Pinch. Faith, dear, not that I care one pin for their talk there; but I like to look upon the player-men, and would see, if I could, the gallant you say loves me: that's all, dear bud.

Pinch. Is that all, dear bud?

Alith. This proceeds from my example!

Mrs. Pinch. But if the play be done, let's go abroad, however, dear bud.

Pinch. Come, have a little patience, and thou shalt go into the country on Friday.

Mrs. Pinch. Therefore I would see first some sights to tell my neighbours of. Nay, I will go abroad, that's once.

Alith. I'm the cause of this desire too!

Pinch. But now I think on't, who, who was the cause of Horner's coming to my lodging to-day? That was you.

Alith. No, you, because you would not let him see your handsome wife out of your lodging.

Mrs. Pinch. Why, O Lord! did the gentleman come hither to see me indeed?

Pinch. No, no.—You are not the cause of that damned question too, mistress Alithea?—[*Aside.*] Well, she's in the right of it. He is in love with my wife—and comes after her—'tis so—but I'll nip his love in the bud; lest he should follow us into the country, and break his chariot-wheel near our house, on purpose for an excuse to come to't. But I think I know the town.

Mrs. Pinch. Come, pray, bud, let's go abroad before 'tis late; for I will go, that's flat and plain.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] So! the obstinacy already of the town-wife; and I must, whilst she's here, humour her like one.—[*Aloud.*] Sister, how shall we do, that she may not be seen, or known?

Alith. Let her put on her mask.

Pinch. Pshaw! a mask makes people but the more inquisitive, and is as ridiculous a disguise as a stage-beard: her shape, stature, habit, will be known. And if we should meet with Horner, he would be sure to take acquaintance with us, must wish her joy, kiss her, talk to her, leer upon her, and the devil and all. No, I'll not use her to a mask, 'tis dangerous; for masks have made more cuckolds than the best faces that ever were known.

Alith. How will you do then?

Mrs. Pinch. Nay, shall we go? The Exchange will be shut, and I have a mind to see that.

Pinch. So—I have it—I'll dress her up in the suit we are to carry down to her brother, little sir James; nay, I understand the town-tricks. Come, let's go dress her. A mask! no—a woman masked, like a covered dish, gives a man curiosity and appetite; when, it may be, uncovered, 'twould turn his stomach: no, no.

Alith. Indeed your comparison is something a greasy one: but I had a gentle gallant used to say, A beauty masked, like the sun in eclipse, gathers together more gazers than if it shined out. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The New Exchange.*

Enter HORNER, HARCOURT, *and* DORILANT.

Dor. Engaged to women, and not sup with us!

Horn. Ay, a pox on 'em all!

Har. You were much a more reasonable man in the morning, and had as noble resolutions against 'em, as a widower of a week's liberty.

Dor. Did I ever think to see you keep company with women in vain?

Horn. In vain! no—'tis since I can't love 'em, to be revenged on 'em.

Har. Now your sting is gone, you looked in the box amongst all those women like a drone in the hive; all upon you, shoved and ill-used by 'em all, and thrust from one side to t'other.

Dor. Yet he must be buzzing amongst 'em still, like other beetle-headed liquorish drones. Avoid 'em, and hate 'em, as they hate you.

Horn. Because I do hate 'em, and would hate 'em yet more, I'll frequent 'em. You may see by marriage, nothing makes a man hate a woman more than her constant conversation. In short, I converse with 'em, as you do with rich fools, to laugh at 'em and use 'em ill.

Dor. But I would no more sup with women, unless I could lie with 'em, than sup with a rich coxcomb, unless I could cheat him.

Horn. Yes, I have known thee sup with a fool for his drinking; if he could set out your hand that way only, you were satisfied, and if he were a wine-swallowing mouth, 'twas enough.

Har. Yes, a man drinks often with a fool, as he

tosses with a marker, only to keep his hand in use. But do the ladies drink?

Horn. Yes, sir; and I shall have the pleasure at least of laying 'em flat with a bottle, and bring as much scandal that way upon 'em as formerly t'other.

Har. Perhaps you may prove as weak a brother among 'em that way as t'other.

Dor. Foh! drinking with women is as unnatural as scolding with 'em. But 'tis a pleasure of decayed fornicators, and the basest way of quenching love.

Har. Nay, 'tis drowning love, instead of quenching it. But leave us for civil women too!

Dor. Ay, when he can't be the better for 'em. We hardly pardon a man that leaves his friend for a wench, and that's a pretty lawful call.

Horn. Faith, I would not leave you for 'em, if they would not drink.

Dor. Who would disappoint his company at Lewis's for a gossiping?

Har. Foh! Wine and women, good apart, together are as nauseous as sack and sugar. But hark you, sir, before you go, a little of your advice; an old maimed general, when unfit for action, is fittest for counsel. I have other designs upon women than eating and drinking with them; I am in love with Sparkish's mistress, whom he is to marry tomorrow: now how shall I get her?

Enter SPARKISH, *looking about.*

Horn. Why here comes one will help you to her.

Har. He! he, I tell you, is my rival, and will hinder my love.

Horn. No; a foolish rival and a jealous husband assist their rival's designs; for they are sure to make their women hate them, which is the first step to their love for another man.

Har. But I cannot come near his mistress but in his company.

Horn. Still the better for you; for fools are most easily cheated when they themselves are accessaries: and he is to be bubbled of his mistress as of his money, the common mistress, by keeping him company.

Spark. Who is that that is to be bubbled? Faith, let me snack; I han't met with a bubble since Christmas. 'Gad, I think bubbles are like their brother woodcocks, go out with the cold weather.

Har. A pox! he did not hear all I hope.
[*Apart to* HORNER.

Spark. Come, you bubbling rogues you, where do we sup?—Oh, Harcourt, my mistress tells me you have been making fierce love to her all the play long: ha! ha!—But I—

Har. I make love to her!

Spark. Nay, I forgive thee, for I think I know thee, and I know her; but I am sure I know myself.

Har. Did she tell you so? I see all women are like these of the Exchange; who, to enhance the prize of their commodities, report to their fond customers offers which were never made 'em.

Horn. Ay, women are apt to tell before the intrigue, as men after it, and so show themselves the vainer sex. But hast thou a mistress, Sparkish? 'Tis as hard for me to believe it, as that thou ever hadst a bubble, as you bragged just now.

Spark. O, your servant, sir: are you at your raillery, sir? But we are some of us beforehand with you to-day at the play. The wits were something bold with you, sir; did you not hear us laugh?

Horn. Yes; but I thought you had gone to plays, to laugh at the poet's wit, not at your own.

Spark. Your servant, sir: no, I thank you. 'Gad I go to a play as to a country treat; I carry my own wine to one, and my own wit to t'other, or else I'm sure I should not be merry at either. And the reason why we are so often louder than the players, is, because we think we speak more wit, and so become the poet's rivals in his audience: for to tell you the truth, we hate the silly rogues; nay, so much, that we find fault even with their bawdy upon the stage, whilst we talk nothing else in the pit as loud.

Horn. But why shouldst thou hate the silly poets? Thou hast too much wit to be one; and they, like whores, are only hated by each other: and thou dost scorn writing, I'm sure.

Spark. Yes; I'd have you to know I scorn writing: but women, women, that make men do all foolish things, make 'em write songs too. Everybody does it. 'Tis even as common with lovers, as playing with fans; and you can no more help rhyming to your Phillis, than drinking to your Phillis.

Har. Nay, poetry in love is no more to be avoided than jealousy.

Dor. But the poets damned your songs, did they?

Spark. Damn the poets! they have turned 'em into burlesque, as they call it. That burlesque is a hocus-pocus trick they have got, which, by the virtue of *Hictius doctius topsy turvy*, they make a wise and witty man in the world, a fool upon the stage you know not how: and 'tis therefore I hate 'em too, for I know not but it may be my own case; for they'll put a man into a play for looking asquint. Their predecessors were contented to make serving-men only their stage-fools: but these rogues must have gentlemen, with a pox to 'em, nay, knights; and, indeed, you shall hardly see a fool upon the stage but he's a knight. And to tell you the truth, they have kept me these six years from being a knight in earnest, for fear of being knighted in a play, and dubbed a fool.

Dor. Blame 'em not, they must follow their copy, the age.

Har. But why shouldst thou be afraid of being in a play, who expose yourself every day in the playhouses, and at public places?

Horn. 'Tis but being on the stage, instead of standing on a bench in the pit.

Dor. Don't you give money to painters to draw you like? and are you afraid of your pictures at length in a playhouse, where all your mistresses may see you?

Spark. A pox! painters don't draw the smallpox or pimples in one's face. Come, damn all your silly authors whatever, all books and booksellers, by the world; and all readers, courteous or uncourteous!

Har. But who comes here, Sparkish?

Enter MR. PINCHWIFE *and* MRS. PINCHWIFE *in man's clothes*, ALITHEA *and* LUCY.

Spark. Oh, hide me! There's my mistress too.
[SPARKISH *hides himself behind* HARCOURT.

Har. She sees you.

Spark. But I will not see her. 'Tis time to go to Whitehall, and I must not fail the drawing-room.

Har. Pray, first carry me, and reconcile me to her.

Spark. Another time. Faith, the king will have supped.

Har. Not with the worse stomach for thy absence. Thou art one of those fools that think their attendance at the king's meals as necessary as his physicians, when you are more troublesome to him than his doctors or his dogs.

Spark. Pshaw! I know my interest, sir. Prithee hide me.

Horn. Your servant, Pinchwife.—What, he knows us not!

Pinch. Come along. [*To his wife aside.*

Mrs. Pinch. Pray, have you any ballads? give me sixpenny worth.

Clasp. We have no ballads.

Mrs. Pinch. Then give me *Covent-Garden Drollery*, and a play or two—Oh, here's *Tarugo's Wiles*, and the *Slighted Maiden;* I'll have them.

Pinch. No; plays are not for your reading. Come along; will you discover yourself?

[*Apart to her.*

Horn. Who is that pretty youth with him, Sparkish?

Spark. I believe his wife's brother, because he's something like her: but I never saw her but once.

Horn. Extremely handsome; I have seen a face like it too. Let us follow 'em.

[*Exeunt* MR. PINCHWIFE, MRS. PINCHWIFE, ALITHEA, *and* LUCY; HORNER *and* DORILANT *following them.*

Har. Come, Sparkish, your mistress saw you, and will be angry you go not to her. Besides, I would fain be reconciled to her, which none but you can do, dear friend.

Spark. Well, that's a better reason, dear friend. I would not go near her now for her's or my own sake; but I can deny you nothing: for though I have known thee a great while, never go, if I do not love thee as well as a new acquaintance.

Har. I am obliged to you indeed, dear friend. I would be well with her, only to be well with thee still; for these ties to wives usually dissolve all ties to friends. I would be contented she should enjoy you a-nights, but I would have you to myself a-days as I have had, dear friend.

Spark. And thou shalt enjoy me a-days, dear, dear friend, never stir: and I'll be divorced from her, sooner than from thee. Come along.

Har. [*Aside.*] So, we are hard put to't, when we make our rival our procurer; but neither she nor her brother would let me come near her now. When all's done, a rival is the best cloak to steal to a mistress under, without suspicion; and when we have once got to her as we desire, we throw him off like other cloaks.

[*Exit* SPARKISH, HARCOURT *following him.*

Re-enter MR. PINCHWIFE *and* MRS. PINCHWIFE.

Pinch. [*To* ALITHEA.] Sister, if you will not go, we must leave you.—[*Aside.*] The fool her gallant and she will muster up all the young saunterers of this place, and they will leave their dear sempstresses to follow us. What a swarm of cuckolds and cuckold-makers are here!—Come, let's be gone, mistress Margery.

Mrs. Pinch. Don't you believe that; I han't half my bellyfull of sights yet.

Pinch. Then walk this way.

Mrs. Pinch. Lord, what a power of brave signs are here! stay—the Bull's-Head, the Ram's-Head, and the Stag's Head, dear—

Pinch. Nay, if every husband's proper sign here were visible, they would be all alike.

Mrs. Pinch. What d'ye mean by that, bud?

Pinch. 'Tis no matter—no matter, bud.

Mrs. Pinch. Pray tell me: nay, I will know.

Pinch. They would be all Bulls, Stags, and Rams-heads.

[*Exeunt* MR. PINCHWIFE *and* MRS. PINCHWIFE.

Re-enter SPARKISH, HARCOURT, ALITHEA, *and* LUCY, *at the other door.*

Spark. Come, dear madam, for my sake you shall be reconciled to him.

Alith. For your sake I hate him.

Har. That's something too cruel, madam, to hate me for his sake.

Spark. Ay indeed, madam, too, too cruel to me, to hate my friend for my sake.

Alith. I hate him because he is your enemy; and you ought to hate him too, for making love to me, if you love me.

Spark. That's a good one! I hate a man for loving you! If he did love you, 'tis but what he can't help; and 'tis your fault, not his, if he admires you. I hate a man for being of my opinion! I'll ne'er do't, by the world.

Alith. Is it for your honour, or mine, to suffer a man to make love to me, who am to marry you to-morrow?

Spark. Is it for your honour, or mine, to have me jealous? That he makes love to you, is a sign you are handsome; and that I am not jealous, is a sign you are virtuous. That I think is for your honour.

Alith. But 'tis your honour too I am concerned for.

Har. But why, dearest madam, will you be more concerned for his honour than he is himself? Let his honour alone, for my sake and his. He! he has no honour—

Spark. How's that?

Har. But what my dear friend can guard himself.

Spark. O ho—that's right again.

Har. Your care of his honour argues his neglect of it, which is no honour to my dear friend here. Therefore once more, let his honour go which way it will, dear madam.

Spark. Ay, ay; were it for my honour to marry a woman whose virtue I suspected, and could not trust her in a friend's hands?

Alith. Are you not afraid to lose me?

Har. He afraid to lose you, madam! No, no—you may see how the most estimable and most glorious creature in the world is valued by him. Will you not see it?

Spark. Right, honest Frank, I have that noble value for her that I cannot be jealous of her.

Alith. You mistake him. He means, you care not for me, nor who has me.

Spark. Lord, madam, I see you are jealous! Will you wrest a poor man's meaning from his words?

Alith. You astonish me, sir, with your want of jealousy.

Spark. And you make me giddy, madam, with your jealousy and fears, and virtue and honour. Gad, I see virtue makes a woman as troublesome as a little reading or learning.

Alith. Monstrous!

Lucy. Well, to see what easy husbands these women of quality can meet with! a poor chambermaid can never have such ladylike luck. Besides, he's thrown away upon her. She'll make no use of her fortune, her blessing, none to a gentleman, for a pure cuckold; for it requires good breeding to be a cuckold. [*Aside.*

Alith. I tell you then plainly, he pursues me to marry me.

Spark. Pshaw!

Har. Come, madam, you see you strive in vain to make him jealous of me. My dear friend is the kindest creature in the world to me.

Spark. Poor fellow!

Har. But his kindness only is not enough for me, without your favour, your good opinion, dear madam: 'tis that must perfect my happiness. Good gentleman, he believes all I say: would you would do so! Jealous of me! I would not wrong him nor you for the world.

Spark. Look you there. Hear him, hear him, and do not walk away so.

[ALITHEA *walks carelessly to and fro.*

Har. I love you, madam, so—

Spark. How's that? Nay, now you begin to go too far indeed.

Har. So much, I confess, I say, I love you, that I would not have you miserable, and cast yourself away upon so unworthy and inconsiderable a thing as what you see here.

[*Clapping his hand on his breast, points at* SPARKISH.

Spark. No, faith, I believe thou wouldst not: now his meaning is plain; but I knew before thou wouldst not wrong me, nor her.

Har. No, no, Heavens forbid the glory of her sex should fall so low, as into the embraces of such a contemptible wretch, the least of mankind—my dear friend here—I injure him!

[*Embracing* SPARKISH.

Alith. Very well.

Spark. No, no, dear friend, I knew it.—Madam, you see he will rather wrong himself than me, in giving himself such names.

Alith. Do not you understand him yet?

Spark. Yes: how modestly he speaks of himself, poor fellow!

Alith. Methinks he speaks impudently of yourself, since—before yourself too; insomuch that I can no longer suffer his scurrilous abusiveness to you, no more than his love to me. [*Offers to go.*

Spark. Nay, nay, madam, pray stay—his love to you! Lord, madam, has he not spoke yet plain enough?

Alith. Yes, indeed, I should think so.

Spark. Well then, by the world, a man can't speak civilly to a woman now, but presently she says, he makes love to her. Nay, madam, you shall stay, with your pardon, since you have not yet understood him, till he has made an eclaircissement of his love to you, that is, what kind of love it is. Answer to thy catechism, friend; do you love my mistress here?

Har. Yes, I wish she would not doubt it.

Spark. But how do you love her?

Har. With all my soul.

Alith. I thank him, methinks he speaks plain enough now.

Spark. [*To* ALITHEA.] You are out still.—But with what kind of love, Harcourt?

Har. With the best and the truest love in the world.

Spark. Look you there then, that is with no matrimonial love, I'm sure.

Alith. How's that? do you say matrimonial love is not best?

Spark. 'Gad, I went too far ere I was aware. But speak for thyself, Harcourt, you said you would not wrong me nor her.

Har. No, no, madam, e'en take him for Heaven's sake.

Spark. Look you there, madam.

Har. Who should in all justice be yours, he that loves you most. [*Claps his hand on his breast.*

Alith. Look you there, Mr. Sparkish, who's that?

Spark. Who should it be?—Go on, Harcourt.

Har. Who loves you more than women titles, or fortune fools. [*Points at* SPARKISH.

Spark. Look you there, he means me still, for he points at me.

Alith. Ridiculous!

Har. Who can only match your faith and constancy in love.

Spark. Ay.

Har. Who knows, if it be possible, how to value so much beauty and virtue.

Spark. Ay.

Har. Whose love can no more be equalled in the world, than that heavenly form of yours.

Spark. No.

Har. Who could no more suffer a rival, than your absence, and yet could no more suspect your virtue, than his own constancy in his love to you.

Spark. No.

Har. Who, in fine, loves you better than his eyes, that first made him love you.

Spark. Ay—Nay, madam, faith, you shan't go, till—

Alith. Have a care, lest you make me stay too long.

Spark. But till he has saluted you; that I may be assured you are friends, after his honest advice and declaration. Come, pray, madam, be friends with him.

Re-enter MR. PINCHWIFE *and* MRS. PINCHWIFE.

Alith. You must pardon me, sir, that I am not yet so obedient to you.

Pinch. What, invite your wife to kiss men? Monstrous! are you not ashamed? I will never forgive you.

Spark. Are you not ashamed, that I should have more confidence in the chastity of your family than you have? You must not teach me, I am a man of honour, sir, though I am frank and free; I am frank, sir—

Pinch. Very frank, sir, to share your wife with your friends.

Spark. He is an humble, menial friend, such as reconciles the differences of the marriage bed; you know man and wife do not always agree; I design him for that use, therefore would have him well with my wife.

Pinch. A menial friend!—you will get a great many menial friends, by showing your wife as you do.

Spark. What then? It may be I have a pleasure in't, as I have to show fine clothes at a playhouse, the first day, and count money before poor rogues.

Pinch. He that shows his wife or money, will be in danger of having them borrowed sometimes.

Spark. I love to be envied, and would not marry a wife that I alone could love; loving alone is as dull as eating alone. Is it not a frank age? and I am a frank person; and to tell you the truth, it may be, I love to have rivals in a wife, they make her seem to a man still but as a kept mistress; and so good night, for I must to Whitehall.—Madam, I hope you are now reconciled to my friend; and so I wish you a good night, madam, and sleep if you can; for to-morrow you know I must visit you early with a canonical gentleman.—Good night, dear Harcourt. [*Exit.*

Har. Madam, I hope you will not refuse my visit to-morrow, if it should be earlier with a canonical gentleman than Mr. Sparkish's.

Pinch. This gentlewoman is yet under my care, therefore you must yet forbear your freedom with her, sir. [*Coming between* ALITHEA *and* HARCOURT.

Har. Must, sir?

Pinch. Yes, sir, she is my sister.

Har. 'Tis well she is, sir—for I must be her servant, sir.—Madam—

Pinch. Come away, sister, we had been gone, if it had not been for you, and so avoided these lewd rake-hells, who seem to haunt us.

Re-enter HORNER *and* DORILANT.

Horn. How now, Pinchwife!

Pinch. Your servant.

Horn. What! I see a little time in the country makes a man turn wild and unsociable, and only fit to converse with his horses, dogs, and his herds.

Pinch. I have business, sir, and must mind it; your business is pleasure, therefore you and I must go different ways.

Horn. Well, you may go on, but this pretty young gentleman— [*Takes hold of* MRS. PINCHWIFE.

Har. The lady—

Dor. And the maid—

Horn. Shall stay with us; for I suppose their business is the same with ours, pleasure.

Pinch. 'Sdeath, he knows her, she carries it so sillily! yet if he does not, I should be more silly to discover it first. [*Aside.*

Alith. Pray, let us go, sir.

Pinch. Come, come—

Horn. [*To* MRS. PINCHWIFE.] Had you not rather stay with us?—Prithee, Pinchwife, who is this pretty young gentleman?

Pinch. One to whom I'm a guardian.—[*Aside.*] I wish I could keep her out of your hands.

Horn. Who is he? I never saw anything so pretty in all my life.

Pinch. Pshaw! do not look upon him so much, he's a poor bashful youth, you'll put him out of countenance.—Come away, brother. [*Offers to take her away.*

Horn. O, your brother!

Pinch. Yes, my wife's brother.—Come, come, she'll stay supper for us.

Horn. I thought so, for he is very like her I saw you at the play with, whom I told you I was in love with.

Mrs. Pinch. [*Aside.*] O jeminy! is that he that was in love with me? I am glad on't, I vow, for he's a curious fine gentleman, and I love him already too.—[*To* MR. PINCHWIFE.] Is this he, bud?

Pinch. Come away, come away. [*To his wife.*

Horn. Why, what haste are you in? why won't you let me talk with him?

Pinch. Because you'll debauch him; he's yet young and innocent, and I would not have him debauched for anything in the world.—[*Aside.*] How she gazes on him! the devil!

Horn. Harcourt, Dorilant, look you here, this is the likeness of that dowdy he told us of, his wife; did you ever see a lovelier creature? The rogue has reason to be jealous of his wife, since she is like him, for she would make all that see her in love with her.

Har. And, as I remember now, she is as like him here as can be.

Dor. She is indeed very pretty, if she be like him.

Horn. Very pretty? a very pretty commendation!—she is a glorious creature, beautiful beyond all things I ever beheld.

Pinch. So, so.

Har. More beautiful than a poet's first mistress of imagination.

Horn. Or another man's last mistress of flesh and blood.

Mrs. Pinch. Nay, now you jeer, sir; pray don't jeer me.

Pinch. Come, come.—[*Aside.*] By Heavens, she'll discover herself!

Horn. I speak of your sister, sir.

Pinch. Ay, but saying she was handsome, if like him, made him blush.—[*Aside.*] I am upon a rack!

Horn. Methinks he is so handsome he should not be a man.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] O, there 'tis out! he has discovered her! I am not able to suffer any longer.—[*To his wife.*] Come, come away, I say.

Horn. Nay, by your leave, sir, he shall not go yet.—[*Aside to them.*] Harcourt, Dorilant, let us torment this jealous rogue a little.

Har. } How?
Dor. }

Horn. I'll show you.

Pinch. Come, pray let him go, I cannot stay fooling any longer; I tell you his sister stays supper for us.

Horn. Does she? Come then, we'll all go sup with her and thee.

Pinch. No, now I think on't, having stayed so long for us, I warrant she's gone to bed.—[*Aside.*] I wish she and I were well out of their hands.—[*To his wife.*] Come, I must rise early to-morrow, come.

Horn. Well then, if she be gone to bed, I wish her and you a good night. But pray, young gentleman, present my humble service to her.

Mrs. Pinch. Thank you heartily, sir.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, she will discover herself yet in spite of me.—[*Aloud.*] He is something more civil to you, for your kindness to his sister, than I am, it seems.

Horn. Tell her, dear sweet little gentleman, for all your brother there, that you have revived the love I had for her at first sight in the playhouse.

Mrs. Pinch. But did you love her indeed, and indeed?

Pinch. [*Aside.*] So, so.—[*Aloud.*] Away, I say.

Horn. Nay, stay.—Yes, indeed, and indeed, pray do you tell her so, and give her this kiss from me. [*Kisses her.*

Pinch. [*Aside.*] O heavens! what do I suffer? Now 'tis too plain he knows her, and yet—

Horn. And this, and this— [*Kisses her again.*

Mrs. Pinch. What do you kiss me for? I am no woman.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] So, there, 'tis out.—[*Aloud.*] Come, I cannot, nor will stay any longer.

Horn. Nay, they shall send your lady a kiss too. Here, Harcourt, Dorilant, will you not? [*They kiss her.*

Pinch. [*Aside.*] How! do I suffer this? Was I not accusing another just now for this rascally patience, in permitting his wife to be kissed before his face? Ten thousand ulcers gnaw away their lips.—[*Aloud.*] Come, come.

Horn. Good night, dear little gentleman; madam, good night; farewell, Pinchwife.—[*Apart to* HARCOURT *and* DORILANT.] Did not I tell you I would raise his jealous gall?

[*Exeunt* HORNER, HARCOURT, *and* DORILANT.

Pinch. So, they are gone at last; stay, let me see first if the coach be at this door. [*Exit.*

Re-enter HORNER, HARCOURT, *and* DORILANT.

Horn. What, not gone yet? Will you be sure to do as I desired you, sweet sir?

Mrs. Pinch. Sweet sir, but what will you give me then?

Horn. Anything. Come away into the next walk. [*Exit, haling away* MRS. PINCHWIFE.

Alith. Hold! hold! what d'ye do?

Lucy. Stay, stay, hold—

Har. Hold, madam, hold, let him present him—he'll come presently; nay, I will never let you go till you answer my question.

Lucy. For God's sake, sir, I must follow 'em.

[ALITHEA *and* LUCY, *struggling with* HARCOURT *and* DORILANT.

Dor. No, I have something to present you with too, you shan't follow them.

Re-enter PINCHWIFE.

Pinch. Where?—how—what's become of?—gone!—whither?

Lucy. He's only gone with the gentleman, who will give him something, an't please your worship.

Pinch. Something!—give him something, with a pox!—where are they?

Alith. In the next walk only, brother.

Pinch. Only, only! where, where?

[*Exit, and returns presently, then goes out again.*

Har. What's the matter with him? why so much concerned? But, dearest madam—

Alith. Pray let me go, sir; I have said and suffered enough already.

Har. Then you will not look upon, nor pity, my sufferings?

Alith. To look upon 'em, when I cannot help 'em, were cruelty, not pity; therefore, I will never see you more.

Har. Let me then, madam, have my privilege of a banished lover, complaining or railing, and giving you but a farewell reason why, if you cannot condescend to marry me, you should not take that wretch, my rival.

Alith. He only, not you, since my honour is engaged so far to him, can give me a reason why I should not marry him; but if he be true, and what I think him to me, I must be so to him. Your servant, sir.

Har. Have women only constancy when 'tis a vice, and are, like Fortune, only true to fools?

Dor. Thou sha't not stir, thou robust creature; you see I can deal with you, therefore you should stay the rather, and be kind.

[*To* LUCY, *who struggles to get from him.*

Re-enter PINCHWIFE.

Pinch. Gone, gone, not to be found! quite gone! ten thousand plagues go with 'em! Which way went they?

Alith. But into t'other walk, brother.

Lucy. Their business will be done presently sure, an't please your worship; it can't be long in doing, I'm sure on't.

Alith. Are they not there?

Pinch. No, you know where they are, you infamous wretch, eternal shame of your family, which you do not dishonour enough yourself you think, but you must help her to do it too, thou legion of bawds!

Alith. Good brother—

Pinch. Damned, damned sister!

Alith. Look you here, she's coming.

Re-enter MRS. PINCHWIFE, *running with her hat under her arm, full of oranges and dried fruit,* HORNER *following.*

Mrs. Pinch. O dear bud, look you here what I have got, see!

Pinch. And what I have got here too, which you can't see. [*Aside, rubbing his forehead.*

Mrs. Pinch. The fine gentleman has given me better things yet.

Pinch. Has he so?—[*Aside.*] Out of breath and coloured!—I must hold yet.

Horn. I have only given your little brother an orange, sir.

Pinch. [*To* HORNER.] Thank you, sir.—[*Aside.*] You have only squeezed my orange, I suppose, and given it me again; yet I must have a city patience.—[*To his wife.*] Come, come away.

Mrs. Pinch. Stay, till I have put up my fine things, bud.

Enter SIR JASPER FIDGET.

Sir Jasp. O, master Horner, come, come, the ladies stay for you; your mistress, my wife, wonders you make not more haste to her.

Horn. I have stayed this half hour for you here, and 'tis your fault I am not now with your wife.

Sir Jasp. But, pray, don't let her know so much; the truth on't is, I was advancing a certain project to his majesty about—I'll tell you.

Horn. No, let's go, and hear it at your house. Good night, sweet little gentleman; one kiss more, you'll remember me now, I hope. [*Kisses her.*

Dor. What, sir Jasper, will you separate friends? He promised to sup with us, and if you take him to your house, you'll be in danger of our company too.

Sir Jasp. Alas! gentlemen, my house is not fit for you; there are none but civil women there, which are not for your turn. He, you know, can bear with the society of civil women now, ha! ha! ha! besides, he's one of my family—he's—he! he! he!

Dor. What is he?

Sir Jasp. Faith, my eunuch, since you'll have it; he! he! he!

[*Exeunt* Sir Jasper Fidget *and* Horner.

Dor. I rather wish thou wert his or my cuckold. Harcourt, what a good cuckold is lost there for want of a man to make him one? Thee and I cannot have Horner's privilege, who can make use of it.

Har. Ay, to poor Horner 'tis like coming to an estate at threescore, when a man can't be the better for't.

Pinch. Come.

Mrs. Pinch. Presently, bud.

Dor. Come, let us go too.—[*To* Alithea.] Madam, your servant.—[*To* Lucy.] Good night, strapper.

Har. Madam, though you will not let me have a good day or night, I wish you one; but dare not name the other half of my wish.

Alith. Good night, sir, for ever.

Mrs. Pinch. I don't know where to put this here, dear bud, you shall eat it; nay, you shall have part of the fine gentleman's good things, or treat, as you call it, when we come home.

Pinch. Indeed I deserve it, since I furnished the best part of it. [*Strikes away the orange.*

The gallant treats presents, and gives the ball;
But 'tis the absent cuckold pays for all. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Pinchwife's *House in the Morning.*

Enter Alithea *dressed in new Clothes, and* Lucy.

Lucy. Well—madam, now have I dressed you, and set you out with so many ornaments, and spent upon you ounces of essence and pulvillio; and all this for no other purpose but as people adorn and perfume a corpse for a stinking second-hand grave: such, or as bad, I think master Sparkish's bed.

Alith. Hold your peace.

Lucy. Nay, madam, I will ask you the reason why you would banish poor master Harcourt for ever from your sight; how could you be so hard-hearted?

Alith. 'Twas because I was not hard-hearted.

Lucy. No, no; 'twas stark love and kindness, I warrant.

Alith. It was so; I would see him no more because I love him.

Lucy. Hey day, a very pretty reason!

Alith. You do not understand me.

Lucy. I wish you may yourself.

Alith. I was engaged to marry, you see, another man, whom my justice will not suffer me to deceive or injure.

Lucy. Can there be a greater cheat or wrong done to a man than to give him your person without your heart? I should make a conscience of it.

Alith. I'll retrieve it for him after I am married a while.

Lucy. The woman that marries to love better, will be as much mistaken as the wencher that marries to live better. No, madam, marrying to increase love is like gaming to become rich; alas! you only lose what little stock you had before.

Alith. I find by your rhetoric you have been bribed to betray me.

Lucy. Only by his merit, that has bribed your heart, you see, against your word and rigid honour. But what a devil is this honour! 'tis sure a disease in the head, like the megrim or falling-sickness, that always hurries people away to do themselves mischief. Men lose their lives by it; women, what's dearer to 'em, their love, the life of life.

Alith. Come, pray talk you no more of honour, nor master Harcourt; I wish the other would come to secure my fidelity to him and his right in me.

Lucy. You will marry him then?

Alith. Certainly, I have given him already my word, and will my hand too, to make it good, when he comes.

Lucy. Well, I wish I may never stick pin more, if he be not an arrant natural, to t'other fine gentleman.

Alith. I own he wants the wit of Harcourt, which I will dispense withal for another want he has, which is want of jealousy, which men of wit seldom want.

Lucy. Lord, madam, what should you do with a fool to your husband? You intend to be honest, don't you? then that husbandly virtue, credulity, is thrown away upon you.

Alith. He only that could suspect my virtue should have cause to do it; 'tis Sparkish's confidence in my truth that obliges me to be so faithful to him.

Lucy. You are not sure his opinion may last.

Alith. I am satisfied, 'tis impossible for him to be jealous after the proofs I have had of him. Jealousy in a husband—Heaven defend me from it! it begets a thousand plagues to a poor woman, the loss of her honour, her quiet, and her—

Lucy. And her pleasure.

Alith. What d'ye mean, impertinent?

Lucy. Liberty is a great pleasure, madam.

Alith. I say, loss of her honour, her quiet, nay, her life sometimes; and what's as bad almost, the loss of this town; that is, she is sent into the country, which is the last ill-usage of a husband to a wife, I think.

Lucy. [*Aside.*] O, does the wind lie there?—[*Aloud.*] Then of necessity, madam, you think a man must carry his wife into the country, if he be wise. The country is as terrible, I find, to our young English ladies, as a monastery to those abroad; and on my virginity, I think they would rather marry a London jailer, than a high sheriff of a county, since neither can stir from his employment. Formerly women of wit married fools for a great estate, a fine seat, or the like; but now 'tis for a pretty seat only in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, St. James's-Fields, or the Pall-Mall.

Enter Sparkish, *and* Harcourt *dressed like a parson.*

Spark. Madam, your humble servant, a happy day to you, and to us all.

Har. Amen.

Alith. Who have we here?

Spark. My chaplain, faith—O madam, poor Harcourt remembers his humble service to you; and, in obedience to your last commands, refrains coming into your sight.

Alith. Is not that he?

Spark. No, fy, no; but to show that he ne'er intended to hinder our match, has sent his brother here to join our hands. When I get me a wife, I must get her a chaplain, according to the custom; this is his brother, and my chaplain.

Alith. His brother!

Lucy. And your chaplain, to preach in your pulpit then— [*Aside.*

Alith. His brother!—

Spark. Nay, I knew you would not believe it. —I told you, sir, she would take you for your brother Frank.

Alith. Believe it!

Lucy. His brother! ha! ha! he! he has a trick left still, it seems. [*Aside.*

Spark. Come, my dearest, pray let us go to church before the canonical hour is past.

Alith. For shame, you are abused still.

Spark. By the world, 'tis strange now you are so incredulous.

Alith. 'Tis strange you are so credulous.

Spark. Dearest of my life, hear me. I tell you this is Ned Harcourt of Cambridge, by the world; you see he has a sneaking college look. 'Tis true he's something like his brother Frank; and they differ from each other no more than in their age, for they were twins.

Lucy. Ha! ha! he!

Alith. Your servant, sir; I cannot be so deceived, though you are. But come, let's hear, how do you know what you affirm so confidently?

Spark. Why, I'll tell you all. Frank Harcourt coming to me this morning to wish me joy, and present his service to you, I asked him if he could help me to a parson. Whereupon he told me, he had a brother in town who was in orders; and he went straight away, and sent him, you see there, to me.

Alith. Yes, Frank goes and puts on a black coat, then tells you he is Ned; that's all you have for't.

Spark. Pshaw! pshaw! I tell you, by the same token, the midwife put her garter about Frank's neck, to know 'em asunder, they were so like.

Alith. Frank tells you this too?

Spark. Ay, and Ned there too: nay, they are both in a story.

Alith. So, so; very foolish.

Spark. Lord, if you won't believe one, you had best try him by your chambermaid there; for chambermaids must needs know chaplains from other men, they are so used to 'em.

Lucy. Let's see: nay, I'll be sworn he has the canonical smirk, and the filthy clammy palm of a chaplain.

Alith. Well, most reverend doctor, pray let us make an end of this fooling.

Har. With all my soul, divine heavenly creature, when you please.

Alith. He speaks like a chaplain indeed.

Spark. Why, was there not soul, divine, heavenly, in what he said?

Alith. Once more, most impertinent black coat, cease your persecution, and let us have a conclusion of this ridiculous love.

Har. I had forgot, I must suit my style to my coat, or I wear it in vain. [*Aside.*

Alith. I have no more patience left; let us make once an end of this troublesome love, I say.

Har. So be it, seraphic lady, when your honour shall think it meet and convenient so to do.

Spark. 'Gad I'm sure none but a chaplain could speak so, I think.

Alith. Let me tell you, sir, this dull trick will not serve your turn; though you delay our marriage, you shall not hinder it.

Har. Far be it from me, munificent patroness, to delay your marriage; I desire nothing more than to marry you presently, which I might do, if you yourself would; for my noble, good-natured, and thrice generous patron here would not hinder it.

Spark. No, poor man, not I, faith.

Har. And now, madam, let me tell you plainly, nobody else shall marry you; by heavens, I'll die first, for I'm sure I should die after it.

Lucy. How his love has made him forget his function, as I have seen it in real parsons!

Alith. That was spoken like a chaplain too? now you understand him, I hope.

Spark. Poor man, he takes it heinously to be refused; I can't blame him, 'tis putting an indignity upon him, not to be suffered; but you'll pardon me, madam, it shan't be; he shall marry us: come away, pray madam.

Lucy. Ha! ha! he! more ado! 'tis late.

Alith. Invincible stupidity! I tell you, he would marry me as your rival, not as your chaplain.

Spark. Come, come, madam. [*Pulling her away.*

Lucy. I pray, madam, do not refuse this reverend divine the honour and satisfaction of marrying you; for I dare say, he has set his heart upon't, good doctor.

Alith. What can you hope or design by this?

Har. I could answer her, a reprieve for a day only, often revokes a hasty doom. At worst, if she will not take mercy on me, and let me marry her, I have at least the lover's second pleasure, hindering my rival's enjoyment, though but for a time. [*Aside.*

Spark. Come, madam, 'tis e'en twelve o'clock, and my mother charged me never to be married out of the canonical hours. Come, come; Lord, here's such a deal of modesty, I warrant, the first day.

Lucy. Yes, an't please your worship, married women show all their modesty the first day, because married men show all their love the first day. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Bedchamber in* MR. PINCHWIFE'S *House.*

MR. PINCHWIFE *and* MRS. PINCHWIFE *discovered.*

Pinch. Come, tell me, I say.

Mrs. Pinch. Lord! han't I told it a hundred times over?

Pinch. [*Aside.*] I would try, if in the repetition of the ungrateful tale, I could find her altering it in the least circumstance; for if her story be false, she is so too.—[*Aloud.*] Come, how was't, baggage?

Mrs. Pinch. Lord, what pleasure you take to hear it sure!

Pinch. No, you take more in telling it I find; but speak, how was't?

Mrs. Pinch. He carried me up into the house next to the Exchange.

Pinch. So, and you two were only in the room!

Mrs. Pinch. Yes, for he sent away a youth that was there, for some dried fruit, and China oranges.

Pinch. Did he so? Damn him for it—and for—

Mrs. Pinch. But presently came up the gentlewoman of the house.

Pinch. O, 'twas well she did; but what did he do whilst the fruit came?

Mrs. Pinch. He kissed me a hundred times, and told me he fancied he kissed my fine sister, meaning me, you know, whom he said he loved with all his soul, and bid me be sure to tell her so, and to desire her to be at her window, by eleven of the clock this morning, and he would walk under it at that time.

Pinch. And he was as good as his word, very punctual; a pox reward him for't! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Pinch. Well, and he said if you were not within, he would come up to her, meaning me, you know, bud, still.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] So—he knew her certainly; but for this confession, I am obliged to her simplicity.—[*Aloud.*] But what, you stood very still when he kissed you?

Mrs. Pinch. Yes, I warrant you; would you have had me discovered myself?

Pinch. But you told me he did some beastliness to you, as you call it; what was't?

Mrs. Pinch. Why, he put—

Pinch. What?

Mrs. Pinch. Why, he put the tip of his tongue between my lips, and so mousled me—and I said, I'd bite it.

Pinch. An eternal canker seize it, for a dog!

Mrs. Pinch. Nay, you need not be so angry with him neither, for to say the truth, he has the sweetest breath I ever knew.

Pinch. The devil! you were satisfied with it then, and would do it again?

Mrs. Pinch. Not unless he should force me.

Pinch. Force you, changeling! I tell you, no woman can be forced.

Mrs. Pinch. Yes, but she may sure, by such a one as he, for he's a proper, goodly, strong man; 'tis hard, let me tell you, to resist him.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] So, 'tis plain she loves him, yet she has not love enough to make her conceal it from me; but the sight of him will increase her aversion for me and love for him; and that love instruct her how to deceive me and satisfy him, all idiot as she is. Love! 'twas he gave women first their craft, their art of deluding. Out of Nature's hands they came plain, open, silly, and fit for slaves, as she and heaven intended 'em; but damned Love—well—I must strangle that little monster whilst I can deal with him.—[*Aloud.*] Go fetch pen, ink, and paper out of the next room.

Mrs. Pinch. Yes, bud. [*Exit.*

Pinch. Why should women have more invention in love than men? It can only be, because they have more desires, more soliciting passions, more lust, and more of the devil.

Re-enter MRS. PINCHWIFE.

Come, minx, sit down and write.

Mrs. Pinch. Ay, dear bud, but I can't do't very well.

Pinch. I wish you could not at all.

Mrs. Pinch. But what should I write for?

Pinch. I'll have you write a letter to your lover.

Mrs. Pinch. O Lord, to the fine gentleman a letter!

Pinch. Yes, to the fine gentleman.

Mrs. Pinch. Lord, you do but jeer; sure you jest.

Pinch. I am not so merry: come, write as I bid you.

Mrs. Pinch. What, do you think I am a fool?

Pinch. [*Aside.*] She's afraid I would not dictate any love to him, therefore she's unwilling.—[*Aloud.*] But you had best begin.

Mrs. Pinch. Indeed, and indeed, but I won't, so I won't.

Pinch. Why?

Mrs. Pinch. Because he's in town; you may send for him if you will.

Pinch. Very well, you would have him brought to you; is it come to this? I say, take the pen and write, or you'll provoke me.

Mrs. Pinch. Lord, what d'ye make a fool of me for? Don't I know that letters are never writ but from the country to London, and from London into the country? Now he's in town, and I am in town too; therefore I can't write to him, you know.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] So, I am glad it is no worse; she is innocent enough yet.—[*Aloud.*] Yes, you may, when your husband bids you, write letters to people that are in town.

Mrs. Pinch. O, may I so? then I'm satisfied.

Pinch. Come, begin:—*Sir*— [*Dictates.*

Mrs. Pinch. Shan't I say, *Dear Sir?*—You know one says always something more than bare *sir.*

Pinch. Write as I bid you, or I will write whore with this penknife in your face.

Mrs. Pinch. Nay, good bud—*Sir*— [*Writes.*

Pinch. *Though I suffered last night your nauseous, loathed kisses and embraces*—Write!

Mrs. Pinch. Nay, why should I say so? You know I told you he had a sweet breath.

Pinch. Write!

Mrs. Pinch. Let me but put out *loathed.*

Pinch. Write, I say!

Mrs. Pinch. Well then. [*Writes.*

Pinch. Let's see, what have you writ?—[*Takes the paper and reads.*] *Though I suffered last night your kisses and embraces*—Thou impudent creature! where is *nauseous* and *loathed?*

Mrs Pinch. I can't abide to write such filthy words.

Pinch. Once more write as I'd have you, and question it not, or I will spoil thy writing with this. I will stab out those eyes that cause my mischief. [*Holds up the penknife.*

Mrs. Pinch. O Lord! I will.

Pinch. So—so—let's see now.—[*Reads.*] *Though I suffered last night your nauseous, loathed kisses and embraces*—go on—*yet I would not have you presume that you shall ever repeat them*—so— [*She writes.*

Mrs. Pinch. I have writ it.

Pinch. On, then—*I then concealed myself from your knowledge, to avoid your insolencies.*— [*She writes.*

Mrs. Pinch. So—

Pinch. The same reason, now I am out of your hands— [*She writes.*

Mrs. Pinch. So—

Pinch. Makes me own to you my unfortunate, though innocent frolic, of being in man's clothes— [*She writes.*

Mrs. Pinch. So—

Pinch. That you may for evermore cease to pursue her, who hates and detests you— [*She writes on.*

Mrs. Pinch. So. Heigh! [*Sighs.*

Pinch. What, do you sigh?—*detests you—as much as she loves her husband and her honour*—

Mrs. Pinch. I vow, husband, he'll ne'er believe I should write such a letter.

Pinch. What, he'd expect a kinder from you? Come, now your name only.

Mrs. Pinch. What, shan't I say *Your most faithful humble servant till death?*

Pinch. No, tormenting fiend!—[*Aside.*] Her style, I find, would be very soft.—[*Aloud.*] Come, wrap it up now, whilst I go fetch wax and a candle; and write on the backside, *For Mr. Horner.* [*Exit.*

Mrs. Pinch. For Mr. Horner.—So, I am glad he has told me his name. Dear Mr. Horner! but why should I send thee such a letter that will vex thee, and make thee angry with me?—Well, I will not send it.—Ay, but then my husband will kill me—for I see plainly he won't let me love Mr. Horner—but what care I for my husband?—I won't, so I won't, send poor Mr. Horner such a letter—But then my husband—but oh, what if I writ at bottom my husband made me write it?—Ay, but then my husband would see't.—Can one have no shift? ah, a London woman would have had a hundred presently. Stay—what if I should write a letter, and wrap it up like this, and write upon't too? Ay, but then my husband would see't—I don't know what to do.—But yet evads I'll try, so I will—for I will not send this letter to poor Mr. Horner, come what will on't.

Dear, sweet Mr. Horner—[*Writes, and repeats what she writes.*]—so—*my husband would have me send you a base, rude, unmannerly letter; but I won't*—so—*and would have me forbid you loving me; but I won't*—so—*and would have me say to you, I hate you, poor Mr. Horner; but I won't tell a lie for him*—there—*for I'm sure if you and I were in the country at cards together*—so—*I could not help treading on your toe under the table*—so—*or rubbing knees with you, and staring in your face, till you saw me*—very well—*and then looking down, and blushing for an hour together*—so—*but I must make haste before my husband comes: and now he has taught me to write letters, you shall have longer ones from me, who am, dear, dear, poor, dear Mr. Horner, your most humble friend, and servant to command till death,*—MARGERY PINCHWIFE.

Stay, I must give him a hint at bottom—so—now wrap it up just like t'other—so—now write *For Mr. Horner*—But oh now, what shall I do with it? for here comes my husband.

Re-enter PINCHWIFE.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] I have been detained by a sparkish coxcomb, who pretended a visit to me; but I fear 'twas to my wife—[*Aloud.*] What, have you done?

Mrs. Pinch. Ay, ay, bud, just now.

Pinch. Let's see't: what d'ye tremble for? what, you would not have it go?

Mrs. Pinch. Here—[*Aside.*] No, I must not give him that: so I had been served if I had given him this. [*He opens and reads the first letter.*

Pinch. Come, where's the wax and seal?

Mrs. Pinch. [*Aside.*] Lord, what shall I do now? Nay, then I have it—[*Aloud.*] Pray let me see't. Lord, you think me so arrant a fool, I cannot seal a letter; I will do't, so I will.

[*Snatches the letter from him, changes it for the other, seals it, and delivers it to him.*

Pinch. Nay, I believe you will learn that, and other things too, which I would not have you.

Mrs. Pinch. So, han't I done it curiously?—[*Aside.*] I think I have; there's my letter going to Mr. Horner, since he'll needs have me send letters to folks.

Pinch. 'Tis very well; but I warrant, you would not have it go now?

Mrs. Pinch. Yes, indeed, but I would, bud, now.

Pinch. Well, you are a good girl then. Come, let me lock you up in your chamber, till I come back; and be sure you come not within three strides of the window when I am gone, for I have a spy in the street.—[*Exit* Mrs. PINCHWIFE, PINCHWIFE *locks the door.*] At least 'tis fit she thinks so. If we do not cheat women, they'll cheat us, and fraud may be justly used with secret enemies, of which a wife is the most dangerous; and he that has a handsome one to keep, and a frontier town, must provide against treachery, rather than open force. Now I have secured all within, I'll deal with the foe without, with false intelligence.

[*Holds up the letter. Exit.*

SCENE III.—HORNER'S *Lodging.*

Enter HORNER *and* QUACK.

Quack. Well, sir, how fadges the new design? have you not the luck of all your brother projectors, to deceive only yourself at last?

Horn. No, good domine doctor, I deceive you, it seems, and others too; for the grave matrons, and old rigid husbands think me as unfit for love, as they are; but their wives, sisters, and daughters know, some of 'em, better things already.

Quack. Already!

Horn. Already, I say. Last night I was drunk with half-a-dozen of your civil persons, as you call 'em, and people of honour, and so was made free of their society and dressing-rooms for ever hereafter; and am already come to the privileges of sleeping upon their pallets, warming smocks, tying shoes and garters, and the like, doctor, already, already, doctor.

Quack. You have made good use of your time, sir.

Horn. I tell thee, I am now no more interruption to 'em, when they sing, or talk bawdy, than a little squab French page who speaks no English.

Quack. But do civil persons and women of honour drink, and sing bawdy songs?

Horn. O, amongst friends, amongst friends.

For your bigots in honour are just like those in religion; they fear the eye of the world more than the eye of Heaven; and think there is no virtue, but railing at vice, and no sin, but giving scandal. They rail at a poor, little, kept player, and keep themselves some young, modest pulpit comedian to be privy to their sins in their closets, not to tell 'em of them in their chapels.

Quack. Nay, the truth on't is, priests, amongst the women now, have quite got the better of us lay-confessors, physicians.

Horn. And they are rather their patients; but—

Enter my Lady Fidget, *looking about her.*

Now we talk of women of honour, here comes one. Step behind the screen there, and but observe, if I have not particular privileges with the women of reputation already, doctor, already. [Quack *retires.*

Lady Fidg. Well, Horner, am not I a woman of honour? you see, I'm as good as my word.

Horn. And you shall see, madam, I'll not be behind-hand with you in honour; and I'll be as good as my word too, if you please but to withdraw into the next room.

Lady Fidg. But first, my dear sir, you must promise to have a care of my dear honour.

Horn. If you talk a word more of your honour, you'll make me incapable to wrong it. To talk of honour in the mysteries of love, is like talking of Heaven or the Deity, in an operation of witchcraft, just when you are employing the devil: it makes the charm impotent.

Lady Fidg. Nay, fy! let us not be smutty. But you talk of mysteries and bewitching to me; I don't understand you.

Horn. I tell you, madam, the word money in a mistress's mouth, at such a nick of time, is not a more disheartening sound to a younger brother, than that of honour to an eager lover like myself.

Lady Fidg. But you can't blame a lady of my reputation to be chary.

Horn. Chary! I have been chary of it already, by the report I have caused of myself.

Lady Fidg. Ay, but if you should ever let other women know that dear secret, it would come out. Nay, you must have a great care of your conduct; for my acquaintance are so censorious, (oh, 'tis a wicked, censorious world, Mr. Horner!) I say, are so censorious, and detracting, that perhaps they'll talk to the prejudice of my honour, though you should not let them know the dear secret.

Horn. Nay, madam, rather than they shall prejudice your honour, I'll prejudice theirs; and, to serve you, I'll lie with 'em all, make the secret their own, and then they'll keep it. I am a Machiavel in love, madam.

Lady Fidg. O, no sir, not that way.

Horn. Nay, the devil take me, if censorious women are to be silenced any other way.

Lady Fidg. A secret is better kept, I hope, by a single person than a multitude; therefore pray do not trust anybody else with it, dear, dear Mr. Horner.

Enter Sir Jasper Fidget.

Sir Jasp. How now!

Lady Fidg. [*Aside.*] O my husband!—prevented —and what's almost as bad, found with my arms about another man—that will appear too much—what shall I say?—[*Aloud.*] Sir Jasper, come hither: I am trying if Mr. Horner were ticklish, and he's as ticklish as can be. I love to torment the confounded toad; let you and I tickle him.

Sir Jasp. No, your ladyship will tickle him better without me, I suppose. But is this your buying china? I thought you had been at the china-house.

Horn. [*Aside.*] China-house! that's my cue, I must take it.—[*Aloud.*] A pox! can't you keep your impertinent wives at home? Some men are troubled with the husbands, but I with the wives; but I'd have you to know, since I cannot be your journeyman by night, I will not be your drudge by day, to squire your wife about, and be your man of straw, or scarecrow only to pies and jays, that would be nibbling at your forbidden fruit; I shall be shortly the hackney gentleman-usher of the town.

Sir Jasp. [*Aside.*] He! he! he! poor fellow, he's in the right on't, faith. To squire women about for other folks, is as ungrateful an employment, as to tell money for other folks.—[*Aloud.*] He! he! he! be'n't angry, Horner.

Lady Fidg. No, 'tis I have more reason to be angry, who am left by you, to go abroad indecently alone; or, what is more indecent, to pin myself upon such ill-bred people of your acquaintance as this is.

Sir Jasp. Nay, prithee, what has he done?

Lady Fidg. Nay, he has done nothing.

Sir Jasp. But what d'ye take ill, if he has done nothing?

Lady Fidg. Ha! ha! ha! faith, I can't but laugh however; why, d'ye think the unmannerly toad would come down to me to the coach? I was fain to come up to fetch him, or go without him, which I was resolved not to do; for he knows china very well, and has himself very good, but will not let me see it, lest I should beg some; but I will find it out, and have what I came for yet.

Horn. [*Apart to* Lady Fidget, *as he follows her to the door.*] Lock the door, madam.—[*Exit* Lady Fidget, *and locks the door.*]—[*Aloud.*] So, she has got into my chamber and locked me out. Oh the impertinency of woman-kind! Well, sir Jasper, plain-dealing is a jewel; if ever you suffer your wife to trouble me again here, she shall carry you home a pair of horns; by my lord mayor she shall; though I cannot furnish you myself, you are sure, yet I'll find a way.

Sir Jasp. Ha! ha! he!—[*Aside.*] At my first coming in, and finding her arms about him, tickling him it seems, I was half jealous, but now I see my folly.—[*Aloud.*] He! he! he! poor Horner.

Horn. Nay, though you laugh now, 'twill be my turn ere long. Oh women, more impertinent, more cunning, and more mischievous than their monkeys, and to me almost as ugly!—Now is she throwing my things about, and rifling all I have; but I'll get into her the back way, and so rifle her for it.

Sir Jasp. Ha! ha! ha! poor angry Horner.

Horn. Stay here a little, I'll ferret her out to you presently, I warrant. [*Exit at the other door.*

[Sir Jasper *talks through the door to his wife, she answers from within.*

Sir Jasp. Wife! my lady Fidget! wife! he is coming in to you the back way.

Lady Fidg. Let him come, and welcome, which way he will.

Sir Jasp. He'll catch you, and use you roughly, and be too strong for you.

Lady Fidg. Don't you trouble yourself, let him if he can.

Quack. [*Aside.*] This indeed I could not have believed from him, nor any but my own eyes.

Enter MRS. SQUEAMISH.

Mrs. Squeam. Where's this woman-hater, this toad, this ugly, greasy, dirty sloven?

Sir Jasp. [*Aside.*] So, the women all will have him ugly: methinks he is a comely person, but his wants make his form contemptible to 'em; and 'tis e'en as my wife said yesterday, talking of him, that a proper handsome eunuch was as ridiculous a thing as a gigantic coward.

Mrs. Squeam. Sir Jasper, your servant: where is the odious beast?

Sir Jasp. He's within in his chamber, with my wife; she's playing the wag with him.

Mrs. Squeam. Is she so? and he's a clownish beast, he'll give her no quarter, he'll play the wag with her again, let me tell you: come, let's go help her.—What, the door's locked?

Sir Jasp. Ay, my wife locked it.

Mrs. Squeam. Did she so? let's break it open then.

Sir Jasp. No, no, he'll do her no hurt.

Mrs. Squeam. No.—[*Aside.*] But is there no other way to get in to 'em? whither goes this? I will disturb 'em. [*Exit at another door.*

Enter Old LADY SQUEAMISH.

Lady Squeam. Where is this harlotry, this impudent baggage, this rambling Tomrigg? O Sir Jasper, I'm glad to see you here; did you not see my vile grandchild come in hither just now?

Sir Jasp. Yes.

Lady Squeam. Ay, but where is she then? where is she? Lord, sir Jasper, I have e'en rattled myself to pieces in pursuit of her: but can you tell what makes she here? they say below, no woman lodges here.

Sir Jasp. No.

Lady Squeam. No! what does she here then? say, if it be not a woman's lodging, what makes she here? But are you sure no woman lodges here?

Sir Jasp. No, nor no man neither, this is Mr. Horner's lodging.

Lady Squeam. Is it so, are you sure?

Sir Jasp. Yes, yes.

Lady Squeam. So; then there's no hurt in't, I hope. But where is he?

Sir Jasp. He's in the next room with my wife.

Lady Squeam. Nay, if you trust him with your wife, I may with my Biddy. They say, he's a merry harmless man now, e'en as harmless a man as ever came out of Italy with a good voice, and as pretty, harmless company for a lady, as a snake without his teeth.

Sir Jasp. Ay, ay, poor man.

Re-enter MRS. SQUEAMISH.

Mrs. Squeam. I can't find 'em.—Oh, are you here, grandmother? I followed, you must know, my lady Fidget hither; 'tis the prettiest lodging, and I have been staring on the prettiest pictures—

Re-enter LADY FIDGET *with a piece of china in her hand, and* HORNER *following.*

Lady Fidg. And I have been toiling and moiling for the prettiest piece of china, my dear.

Horn. Nay, she has been too hard for me, do what I could.

Mrs. Squeam. Oh, lord, I'll have some china too. Good Mr. Horner, don't think to give other people china, and me none; come in with me too.

Horn. Upon my honour, I have none left now.

Mrs. Squeam. Nay, nay, I have known you deny your china before now, but you shan't put me off so. Come.

Horn. This lady had the last there.

Lady Fidg. Yes indeed, madam, to my certain knowledge, he has no more left.

Mrs. Squeam. O, but it may be he may have some you could not find.

Lady Fidg. What, d'ye think if he had had any left, I would not have had it too? for we women of quality never think we have china enough.

Horn. Do not take it ill, I cannot make china for you all, but I will have a roll-waggon for you too, another time.

Mrs. Squeam. Thank you, dear toad.

Lady Fidg. What do you mean by that promise? [*Aside to* HORNER.

Horn. Alas, she has an innocent, literal understanding. [*Aside to* LADY FIDGET.

Lady Squeam. Poor Mr. Horner! he has enough to do to please you all, I see.

Horn. Ay, madam, you see how they use me.

Lady Squeam. Poor gentleman, I pity you.

Horn. I thank you, madam: I could never find pity, but from such reverend ladies as you are; the young ones will never spare a man.

Mrs. Squeam. Come, come, beast, and go dine with us; for we shall want a man at ombre after dinner.

Horn. That's all their use of me, madam, you see.

Mrs. Squeam. Come, sloven, I'll lead you, to be sure of you. [*Pulls him by the cravat.*

Lady Squeam. Alas, poor man, how she tugs him! Kiss, kiss her; that's the way to make such nice women quiet.

Horn. No, madam, that remedy is worse than the torment; they know I dare suffer anything rather than do it.

Lady Squeam. Prithee kiss her, and I'll give you her picture in little, that you admired so last night; prithee do.

Horn. Well, nothing but that could bribe me: I love a woman only in effigy, and good painting as much as I hate them.—I'll do't, for I could adore the devil well painted. [*Kisses* MRS. SQUEAMISH.

Mrs. Squeam. Foh, you filthy toad! nay, now I've done jesting.

Lady Squeam. Ha! ha! ha! I told you so.

Mrs. Squeam. Foh! a kiss of his—

Sir Jasp. Has no more hurt in't, than one of my spaniel's.

Mrs. Squeam. Nor no more good neither.

Quack. I will now believe anything he tells me. [*Aside.*

Enter MR. PINCHWIFE.

Lady Fidg. O Lord, here's a man! Sir Jasper, my mask, my mask! I would not be seen here for the world.

Sir Jasp. What, not when I am with you?

Lady Fidg. No, no, my honour—let's be gone.

Mrs. Squeam. Oh grandmother, let's be gone; make haste, make haste, I know not how he may censure us.

Lady Fidg. Be found in the lodging of anything like a man!—Away.

[*Exeunt* SIR JASPER FIDGET, LADY FIDGET, OLD LADY SQUEAMISH, *and* MRS. SQUEAMISH.

Quack. What's here? another cuckold? he looks like one, and none else sure have any business with him. [*Aside.*

Horn. Well, what brings my dear friend hither?

Pinch. Your impertinency.

Horn. My impertinency!—why, you gentlemen that have got handsome wives, think you have a privilege of saying anything to your friends, and are as brutish as if you were our creditors.

Pinch. No, sir, I'll ne'er trust you any way.

Horn. But why not, dear Jack? why diffide in me thou know'st so well?

Pinch. Because I do know you so well.

Horn. Han't I been always thy friend, honest Jack, always ready to serve thee, in love or battle, before thou wert married, and am so still?

Pinch. I believe so, you would be my second now, indeed.

Horn. Well then, dear Jack, why so unkind, so grum, so strange to me? Come, prithee kiss me, dear rogue: gad I was always, I say, and am still as much thy servant as—

Pinch. As I am yours, sir. What, you would send a kiss to my wife, is that it?

Horn. So, there 'tis—a man can't show his friendship to a married man, but presently he talks of his wife to you. Prithee, let thy wife alone, and let thee and I be all one, as we were wont. What, thou art as shy of my kindness, as a Lombard-street alderman of a courtier's civility at Locket's!

Pinch. But you are over-kind to me, as kind as if I were your cuckold already; yet I must confess you ought to be kind and civil to me, since I am so kind, so civil to you, as to bring you this: look you there, sir. [*Delivers him a letter.*

Horn. What is't?

Pinch. Only a love-letter, sir.

Horn. From whom?—how! this is from your wife—hum—and hum— [*Reads.*

Pinch. Even from my wife, sir: am I not wondrous kind and civil to you now too?—[*Aside.*] But you'll not think her so.

Horn. Ha! is this a trick of his or hers? [*Aside.*

Pinch. The gentleman's surprised I find.—What, you expected a kinder letter?

Horn. No faith, not I, how could I?

Pinch. Yes, yes, I'm sure you did. A man so well made as you are, must needs be disappointed, if the women declare not their passion at first sight or opportunity.

Horn. [*Aside.*] But what should this mean? Stay, the postscript.—[*Reads aside.*] ***Be sure you love me, whatsoever my husband says to the contrary, and let him not see this, lest he should come home and pinch me, or kill my squirrel.***—It seems he knows not what the letter contains.

Pinch. Come, ne'er wonder at it so much.

Horn. Faith, I can't help it.

Pinch. Now, I think I have deserved your infinite friendship and kindness, and have showed myself sufficiently an obliging kind friend and husband; am I not so, to bring a letter from my wife to her gallant?

Horn. Ay, the devil take me, art thou, the most obliging, kind friend and husband in the world, ha! ha!

Pinch. Well, you may be merry, sir; but in short I must tell you, sir, my honour will suffer no jesting.

Horn. What dost thou mean?

Pinch. Does the letter want a comment? Then, know, sir, though I have been so civil a husband, as to bring you a letter from my wife, to let you kiss and court her to my face, I will not be a cuckold, sir, I will not.

Horn. Thou art mad with jealousy. I never saw thy wife in my life but at the play yesterday, and I know not if it were she or no. I court her, kiss her!

Pinch. I will not be a cuckold, I say; there will be danger in making me a cuckold.

Horn. Why, wert thou not well cured of thy last clap?

Pinch. I wear a sword.

Horn. It should be taken from thee, lest thou shouldst do thyself a mischief with it; thou art mad, man.

Pinch. As mad as I am, and as merry as you are, I must have more reason from you ere we part. I say again, though you kissed and courted last night my wife in man's clothes, as she confesses in her letter—

Horn. Ha! [*Aside.*

Pinch. Both she and I say, you must not design it again, for you have mistaken your woman, as you have done your man.

Horn. [*Aside*] O—I understand something now—[*Aloud.*] Was that thy wife! Why wouldst thou not tell me 'twas she? Faith, my freedom with her was your fault, not mine.

Pinch. Faith, so 'twas. [*Aside.*

Horn. Fy! I'd never do't to a woman before her husband's face, sure.

Pinch. But I had rather you should do't to my wife before my face, than behind my back; and that you shall never do.

Horn. No—you will hinder me.

Pinch. If I would not hinder you, you see by her letter she would.

Horn. Well, I must e'en acquiesce then, and be contented with what she writes.

Pinch. I'll assure you 'twas voluntarily writ; I had no hand in't you may believe me.

Horn. I do believe thee, faith.

Pinch. And believe her too, for she's an innocent creature, has no dissembling in her: and so fare you well, sir.

Horn. Pray, however, present my humble service to her, and tell her, I will obey her letter to a tittle, and fulfil her desires, be what they will, or with what difficulty soever I do't; and you shall be no more jealous of me, I warrant her, and you.

Pinch. Well then, fare you well; and play with any man's honour but mine, kiss any man's wife but mine, and welcome. [*Exit.*

Horn. Ha! ha! ha! doctor.

Quack. It seems, he has not heard the report of you, or does not believe it.

Horn. Ha! ha!—now, doctor, what think you?

Quack. Pray let's see the letter—hum—*for—dear—love you—* [*Reads the letter.*

Horn. I wonder how she could contrive it! What say'st thou to't? 'tis an original.

Quack. So are your cuckolds too originals: for they are like no other common cuckolds, and I will henceforth believe it not impossible for you to cuckold the Grand Signior amidst his guards of eunuchs, that I say.

Horn. And I say for the letter, 'tis the first love-letter that ever was without flames, darts, fates, destinies, lying and dissembling in't.

Enter SPARKISH *pulling in* MR. PINCHWIFE.

Spark. Come back, you are a pretty brother-in-law, neither go to church nor to dinner with your sister bride!

Pinch. My sister denies her marriage, and you see is gone away from you dissatisfied.

Spark. Pshaw! upon a foolish scruple, that our parson was not in lawful orders, and did not say all the common-prayer; but 'tis her modesty only, I believe. But let women be never so modest the first day, they'll be sure to come to themselves by night, and I shall have enough of her then. In the mean time, Harry Horner, you must dine with me: I keep my wedding at my aunt's in the Piazza.

Horn. Thy wedding! what stale maid has lived to despair of a husband, or what young one of a gallant?

Spark. O, your servant, sir—this gentleman's sister then,—no stale maid.

Horn. I'm sorry for't.

Pinch. How comes he so concerned for her? [*Aside.*

Spark. You sorry for't? why, do you know any ill by her?

Horn. No, I know none but by thee; 'tis for her sake, not yours, and another man's sake that might have hoped, I thought.

Spark. Another man! another man! what is his name?

Horn. Nay, since 'tis past, he shall be nameless.—[*Aside.*] Poor Harcourt! I am sorry thou hast missed her.

Pinch. He seems to be much troubled at the match. [*Aside.*

Spark. Prithee, tell me—Nay, you shan't go, brother.

Pinch. I must of necessity, but I'll come to you to dinner. [*Exit.*

Spark. But, Harry, what, have I a rival in my wife already? But with all my heart, for he may be of use to me hereafter; for though my hunger is now my sauce, and I can fall on heartily without, the time will come, when a rival will be as good sauce for a married man to a wife, as an orange to veal.

Horn. O thou damned rogue! thou hast set my teeth on edge with thy orange.

Spark. Then let's to dinner—there I was with you again. Come.

Horn. But who dines with thee?

Spark. My friends and relations, my brother Pinchwife, you see, of your acquaintance.

Horn. And his wife?

Spark. No, 'gad, he'll ne'er let her come amongst us good fellows; your stingy country coxcomb keeps his wife from his friends, as he does his little firkin of ale, for his own drinking, and a gentleman can't get a smack on't; but his servants, when his back is turned, broach it at their pleasures, and dust it away, ha! ha! ha!—'Gad, I am witty, I think, considering I was married to-day, by the world; but come—

Horn. No, I will not dine with you, unless you can fetch her too.

Spark. Pshaw! what pleasure canst thou have with women now, Harry?

Horn. My eyes are not gone; I love a good prospect yet, and will not dine with you unless she does too; go fetch her, therefore, but do not tell her husband 'tis for my sake.

Spark. Well, I'll go try what I can do; in the meantime, come away to my aunt's lodging, 'tis in the way to Pinchwife's.

Horn. The poor woman has called for aid, and stretched forth her hand, doctor; I cannot but help her over the pale out of the briars. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A Room in* PINCHWIFE'S *House.*

MRS. PINCHWIFE *alone, leaning on her elbow.—A Table, Pen, Ink, and Paper.*

Mrs. Pinch. Well, 'tis e'en so, I have got the London disease they call love; I am sick of my husband, and for my gallant. I have heard this distemper called a fever, but methinks 'tis like an ague; for when I think of my husband, I tremble, and am in a cold sweat, and have inclinations to vomit; but when I think of my gallant, dear Mr. Horner, my hot fit comes, and I am all in a fever indeed; and, as in other fevers, my own chamber is tedious to me, and I would fain be removed to his, and then methinks I should be well. Ah, poor Mr. Horner! Well, I cannot, will not stay here; therefore I'll make an end of my letter to him, which shall be a finer letter than my last, because I have studied it like anything. Oh sick, sick! [*Takes the pen and writes.*

Enter MR. PINCHWIFE, *who seeing her writing, steals softly behind her and looking over her shoulder, snatches the paper from her.*

Pinch. What, writing more letters?

Mrs. Pinch. O Lord, bud, why d'ye fright me so? [*She offers to run out; he stops her, and reads.*

Pinch. How's this? nay, you shall not stir, madam:—*Dear, dear, dear Mr. Horner*—very well—I have taught you to write letters to good purpose—but let us see't.

First, I am to beg your pardon for my boldness in writing to you, which I'd have you to know I would not have done, had not you said first you loved me so extremely, which if you do, you will never suffer me to lie in the arms of another man whom I loathe, nauseate, and detest.—Now you can't write these filthy words? But what follows?—*Therefore, I hope you will speedily find some way to free me from this unfortunate match, which was never, I assure you, of my choice, but I'm afraid 'tis already too far gone; however, if you love me, as I do you, you will try what you can do: but you must help me away before to-morrow, or else, alas! I shall be for ever out of your reach, for I can defer no longer our—our—* what is to follow *our*?—speak, what—our journey into the country, I suppose—Oh woman!

damned woman! and Love, damned Love, their old tempter! for this is one of his miracles; in a moment he can make those blind that could see, and those see that were blind, those dumb that could speak, and those prattle who were dumb before; nay, what is more than all, make these dough-baked, senseless, indocile animals, women, too hard for us their politic lords and rulers, in a moment. But make an end of your letter, and then I'll make an end of you thus, and all my plagues together. [*Draws his sword.*

Mrs. Pinch. O Lord, O Lord, you are such a passionate man, bud!

Enter SPARKISH.

Spark. How now, what's here to do?

Pinch. This fool here now!

Spark. What! drawn upon your wife? You should never do that, but at night in the dark, when you can't hurt her. This is my sister-in-law, is it not? ay, faith, e'en our country Margery; [*Pulls aside her handkerchief*] one may know her. Come, she and you must go dine with me; dinner's ready, come. But where's my wife? is she not come home yet? where is she?

Pinch. Making you a cuckold; 'tis that they all do, as soon as they can.

Spark. What, the wedding-day? no, a wife that designs to make a cully of her husband will be sure to let him win the first stake of love, by the world. But come, they stay dinner for us: come, I'll lead down our Margery.

Pinch. No—sir, go, we'll follow you.

Spark. I will not wag without you.

Pinch. This coxcomb is a sensible torment to me amidst the greatest in the world. [*Aside.*

Spark. Come, come, madam Margery.

Pinch. No; I'll lead her my way: what, would you treat your friends with mine, for want of your own wife?—[*Leads her to the other door, and locks her in and returns.*] I am contented my rage should take breath— [*Aside.*

Spark. I told Horner this.

Pinch. Come now.

Spark. Lord, how shy you are of your wife! but let me tell you, brother, we men of wit have amongst us a saying, that cuckolding, like the small-pox, comes with a fear; and you may keep your wife as much as you will out of danger of infection, but if her constitution incline her to't, she'll have it sooner or later, by the world, say they.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] What a thing is a cuckold, that every fool can make him ridiculous!—[*Aloud.*] Well, sir—but let me advise you, now you are come to be concerned, because you suspect the danger, not to neglect the means to prevent it, especially when the greatest share of the malady will light upon your own head, for

Hows'e'er the kind wife's belly comes to swell,
The husband breeds for her, and first is ill.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—Mr. PINCHWIFE'S *House.*

Enter MR. PINCHWIFE *and* MRS. PINCHWIFE.—*A Table and Candle.*

Pinch. Come, take the pen and make an end of the letter, just as you intended; if you are false in a tittle, I shall soon perceive it, and punish you with this as you deserve.—[*Lays his hand on his sword.*] Write what was to follow—let's see—*You must make haste, and help me away before to-morrow, or else I shall be for ever out of your reach, for I can defer no longer our*—What follows *our*?

Mrs. Pinch. Must all out, then, bud?—Look you there, then. [MRS. PINCHWIFE *takes the pen and writes.*

Pinch. Let's see—*For I can defer no longer our—wedding—Your slighted* ALITHEA.—What's the meaning of this? my sister's name to't? speak, unriddle.

Mrs. Pinch. Yes, indeed, bud.

Pinch. But why her name to't? speak—speak, I say.

Mrs. Pinch. Ay, but you'll tell her then again. If you would not tell her again—

Pinch. I will not:—I am stunned, my head turns round.—Speak.

Mrs. Pinch. Won't you tell her, indeed, and indeed?

Pinch. No; speak, I say.

Mrs. Pinch. She'll be angry with me; but I had rather she should be angry with me than you, bud. And, to tell you the truth, 'twas she made me write the letter, and taught me what I should write.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] Ha!—I thought the style was somewhat better than her own.—[*Aloud.*] Could she come to you to teach you, since I had locked you up alone?

Mrs. Pinch. O, through the key-hole, bud.

Pinch. But why should she make you write a letter for her to him, since she can write herself?

Mrs. Pinch. Why, she said because—for I was unwilling to do it.

Pinch. Because what—because?

Mrs. Pinch. Because, lest Mr. Horner should be cruel, and refuse her; or be vain afterwards, and show the letter, she might disown it, the hand not being hers.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] How's this? Ha!—then I think I shall come to myself again.—This changeling could not invent this lie: but if she could, why should she? she might think I should soon discover it.—Stay—now I think on't too, Horner said he was sorry she had married Sparkish; and her disowning her marriage to me makes me think she has evaded it for Horner's sake: yet why should she take this course? But men in love are fools; women may well be so.—[*Aloud.*] But hark you, madam, your sister went out in the morning, and I have not seen her within since.

Mrs. Pinch. Alack-a-day, she has been crying all day above, it seems, in a corner.

Pinch. Where is she? let me speak with her.

Mrs. Pinch. [*Aside.*] O Lord, then she'll discover all!—[*Aloud.*] Pray hold, bud; what, d'ye mean to discover me? she'll know I have told you then. Pray, bud, let me talk with her first.

Pinch. I must speak with her, to know whether Horner ever made her any promise, and whether she be married to Sparkish or no.

Mrs. Pinch. Pray, dear bud, don't, till I have spoken with her, and told her that I have told you all; for she'll kill me else.

Pinch. Go then, and bid her come out to me.

Mrs. Pinch. Yes, yes, bud.

Pinch. Let me see— [*Pausing.*

Mrs. Pinch. [*Aside.*] I'll go, but she is not within to come to him: I have just got time to know of Lucy her maid, who first set me on work, what lie I shall tell next; for I am e'en at my wit's end. [*Exit.*

Pinch. Well, I resolve it, Horner shall have her: I'd rather give him my sister than lend him my wife; and such an alliance will prevent his pretensions to my wife, sure. I'll make him of kin to her, and then he won't care for her.

Re-enter MRS. PINCHWIFE.

Mrs. Pinch. O Lord, bud! I told you what anger you would make me with my sister.

Pinch. Won't she come hither?

Mrs. Pinch. No, no. Lack-a-day, she's ashamed to look you in the face; and she says, if you go in to her, she'll run away down stairs, and shamefully go herself to Mr. Horner, who has promised her marriage, she says; and she will have no other, so she won't.

Pinch. Did he so?—promise her marriage!—then she shall have no other. Go tell her so; and if she will come and discourse with me a little concerning the means, I will about it immediately. Go.—[*Exit* MRS. PINCHWIFE.] His estate is equal to Sparkish's, and his extraction as much better than his, as his parts are; but my chief reason is, I'd rather be akin to him by the name of brother-in-law than that of cuckold.

Re-enter MRS. PINCHWIFE.

Well, what says she now?

Mrs. Pinch. Why, she says, she would only have you lead her to Horner's lodging; with whom she first will discourse the matter before she talks with you, which yet she cannot do; for alack, poor creature, she says she can't so much as look you in the face, therefore she'll come to you in a mask. And you must excuse her, if she make you no answer to any question of yours, till you have brought her to Mr. Horner; and if you will not chide her, nor question her, she'll come out to you immediately.

Pinch. Let her come: I will not speak a word to her, nor require a word from her.

Mrs. Pinch. Oh, I forgot: besides, she says, she cannot look you in the face, though through a mask; therefore would desire you to put out the candle.

Pinch. I agree to all. Let her make haste.—There, 'tis out—[*Puts out the candle. Exit* MRS. PINCHWIFE.] My case is something better: I'd rather fight with Horner for not lying with my sister, than for lying with my wife; and of the two, I had rather find my sister too forward than my wife. I expected no other from her free education, as she calls it, and her passion for the town. Well, wife and sister are names which make us expect love and duty, pleasure and comfort; but we find 'em plagues and torments, and are equally, though differently, troublesome to their keeper; for we have as much ado to get people to lie with our sisters as to keep 'em from lying with our wives.

Re-enter MRS. PINCHWIFE *masked, and in hoods and scarfs, and a night-gown and petticoat of* ALITHEA'S.

What, are you come, sister? let us go then.—But first, let me lock up my wife. Mrs. Margery, where are you?

Mrs. Pinch. Here, bud.

Pinch. Come hither, that I may lock you up: get you in.—[*Locks the door.*] Come, sister, where are you now?

[MRS. PINCHWIFE *gives him her hand; but when he lets her go, she steals softly on t'other side of him, and is led away by him for his sister* ALITHEA.

SCENE II.—HORNER'S *Lodging.*

HORNER *and* QUACK.

Quack. What, all alone? not so much as one of your cuckolds here, nor one of their wives! They use to take their turns with you, as if they were to watch you.

Horn. Yes, it often happens that a cuckold is but his wife's spy, and is more upon family duty when he is with her gallant abroad, hindering his pleasure, than when he is at home with her playing the gallant. But the hardest duty a married woman imposes upon a lover is keeping her husband company always.

Quack. And his fondness wearies you almost as soon as hers.

Horn. A pox! keeping a cuckold company, after you have had his wife, is as tiresome as the company of a country squire to a witty fellow of the town, when he has got all his money.

Quack. And as at first a man makes a friend of the husband to get the wife, so at last you are fain to fall out with the wife to be rid of the husband.

Horn. Ay, most cuckold-makers are true courtiers; when once a poor man has cracked his credit for 'em, they can't abide to come near him.

Quack. But at first, to draw him in, are so sweet, so kind, so dear! just as you are to Pinchwife. But what becomes of that intrigue with his wife?

Horn. A pox! he's as surly as an alderman that has been bit; and since he's so coy, his wife's kindness is in vain, for she's a silly innocent.

Quack. Did she not send you a letter by him?

Horn. Yes; but that's a riddle I have not yet solved. Allow the poor creature to be willing, she is silly too, and he keeps her up so close—

Quack. Yes, so close, that he makes her but the more willing, and adds but revenge to her love; which two, when met, seldom fail of satisfying each other one way or other.

Horn. What! here's the man we are talking of, I think.

Enter Mr. Pinchwife, *leading in his Wife masked, muffled, and in her Sister's gown.*

Pshaw!

Quack. Bringing his wife to you is the next thing to bringing a love-letter from her.

Horn. What means this?

Pinch. The last time, you know, sir, I brought you a love-letter; now, you see, a mistress; I think you'll say I am a civil man to you.

Horn. Ay, the devil take me, will I say I thou art the civilest man I ever met with; and I have known some. I fancy I understand thee now better than I did the letter. But, hark thee, in thy ear—

Pinch. What?

Horn. Nothing but the usual question, man: is she sound, on thy word?

Pinch. What, you take her for a wench, and me for a pimp?

Horn. Pshaw! wench and pimp, paw words; I know thou art an honest fellow, and hast a great acquaintance among the ladies, and perhaps hast made love for me, rather than let me make love to thy wife.

Pinch. Come, sir, in short, I am for no fooling.

Horn. Nor I neither: therefore prithee, let's see her face presently. Make her show, man: art thou sure I don't know her?

Pinch. I am sure you do know her.

Horn. A pox! why dost thou bring her to me then?

Pinch. Because she's a relation of mine—

Horn. Is she, faith, man? then thou art still more civil and obliging, dear rogue.

Pinch. Who desired me to bring her to you.

Horn. Then she is obliging, dear rogue.

Pinch. You'll make her welcome for my sake, I hope.

Horn. I hope she is handsome enough to make herself welcome. Prithee let her unmask.

Pinch. Do you speak to her; she would never be ruled by me.

Horn. Madam—[Mrs. Pinchwife *whispers to* Horner.] She says she must speak with me in private. Withdraw, prithee.

Pinch. [*Aside.*] She's unwilling, it seems, I should know all her undecent conduct in this business — [*Aloud.*] Well then, I'll leave you together, and hope when I am gone, you'll agree; if not, you and I shan't agree, sir.

Horn. What means the fool? If she and I agree 'tis no matter what you and I do.

[*Whispers to* Mrs. Pinchwife, *who makes signs with her hand for him to be gone.*

Pinch. In the mean time I'll fetch a parson, and find out Sparkish, and disabuse him. You would have me fetch a parson, would you not? Well then—now I think I am rid of her, and shall have no more trouble with her—our sisters and daughters, like usurers' money, are safest when put out; but our wives, like their writings, never safe, but in our closets under lock and key. [*Exit.*

Enter Boy.

Boy. Sir Jasper Fidget, sir, is coming up. [*Exit.*

Horn. Here's the trouble of a cuckold now we are talking of. A pox on him! has he not enough to do to hinder his wife's sport, but he must other women's too?—Step in here, madam.

[*Exit* Mrs. Pinchwife.

Enter Sir Jasper Fidget.

Sir Jasp. My best and dearest friend.

Horn. [*Aside to* Quack.] The old style, doctor. —[*Aloud.*] Well, be short, for I am busy. What would your impertinent wife have now?

Sir Jasp. Well guessed, i'faith; for I do come from her.

Horn. To invite me to supper? Tell her, I can't come: go.

Sir Jasp. Nay, now you are out, faith; for my lady, and the whole knot of the virtuous gang, as they call themselves, are resolved upon a frolic of coming to you to-night in masquerade, and are all dressed already.

Horn. I shan't be at home.

Sir Jasp. [*Aside.*] Lord, how churlish he is to women!—[*Aloud.*] Nay, prithee don't disappoint 'em; they'll think 'tis my fault: prithee don't. I'll send in the banquet and the fiddles. But make no noise on't; for the poor virtuous rogues would not have it known, for the world, that they go a-masquerading; and they would come to no man's ball but yours.

Horn. Well, well—get you gone; and tell 'em, if they come, 'twill be at the peril of their honour and yours.

Sir Jasp. He! he! he!—we'll trust you for that: farewell. [*Exit.*

Horn. Doctor, anon you too shall be my guest,
But now I'm going to a private feast.
Exeunt.

SCENE III.—*The Piazza of Covent-Garden.*

Enter Sparkish *with a letter in his hand,* Mr. Pinchwife *following.*

Spark. But who would have thought a woman could have been false to me? By the world, I could not have thought it.

Pinch. You were for giving and taking liberty: she has taken it only, sir, now you find in that letter. You are a frank person, and so is she, you see there.

Spark. Nay, if this be her hand—for I never saw it.

Pinch. 'Tis no matter whether that be her hand or no; I am sure this hand, at her desire, led her to Mr. Horner, with whom I left her just now, to go fetch a parson to 'em at their desire too, to deprive you of her for ever; for it seems yours was but a mock marriage.

Spark. Indeed, she would needs have it that 'twas Harcourt himself, in a parson's habit, that married us; but I'm sure he told me 'twas his brother Ned.

Pinch. O, there 'tis out; and you were deceived, not she: for you are such a frank person. But I must be gone.—You'll find her at Mr. Horner's. Go, and believe your eyes. [*Exit.*

Spark. Nay, I'll to her, and call her as many crocodiles, sirens, harpies, and other heathenish names, as a poet would do a mistress who had refused to hear his suit, nay more, his verses on her.—But stay, is not that she following a torch at t'other end of the Piazza? and from Horner's certainly—'tis so.

Enter ALITHEA *following a torch, and* LUCY *behind.*

You are well met, madam, though you don't think so. What, you have made a short visit to Mr. Horner? but I suppose you'll return to him presently, by that time the parson can be with him.

Alith. Mr. Horner and the parson, sir!

Spark. Come, madam, no more dissembling, no more jilting; for I am no more a frank person.

Alith. How's this?

Lucy. So, 'twill work, I see. [*Aside.*

Spark. Could you find out no easy country fool to abuse? none but me, a gentleman of wit and pleasure about the town? But it was your pride to be too hard for a man of parts, unworthy false woman! false as a friend that lends a man money to lose; false as dice, who undo those that trust all they have to 'em.

Lucy. He has been a great bubble, by his similes, as they say. [*Aside.*

Alith. You have been too merry, sir, at your wedding-dinner, sure.

Spark. What, d'ye mock me too?

Alith. Or you have been deluded.

Spark. By you.

Alith. Let me understand you.

Spark. Have you the confidence, (I should call it something else, since you know your guilt,) to stand my just reproaches? you did not write an impudent letter to Mr. Horner? who I find now has clubbed with you in deluding me with his aversion for women, that I might not, forsooth, suspect him for my rival.

Lucy. D'ye think the gentleman can be jealous now, madam? [*Aside.*

Alith. I write a letter to Mr. Horner!

Spark. Nay, madam, do not deny it. Your brother showed it me just now; and told me likewise, he left you at Horner's lodging to fetch a parson to marry you to him: and I wish you joy, madam, joy, joy; and to him too, much joy; and to myself more joy, for not marrying you.

Alith. [*Aside.*] So, I find my brother would break off the match; and I can consent to't, since I see this gentleman can be made jealous.—[*Aloud.*] O Lucy, by his rude usage and jealousy, he makes me almost afraid I am married to him. Art thou sure 'twas Harcourt himself, and no parson, that married us?

Spark. No, madam, I thank you. I suppose, that was a contrivance too of Mr. Horner's and yours, to make Harcourt play the parson; but I would as little as you have him one now, no, not for the world. For, shall I tell you another truth? I never had any passion for you till now, for now I hate you. 'Tis true, I might have married your portion, as other men of parts of the town do sometimes: and so, your servant. And to show my unconcernedness, I'll come to your wedding, and resign you with as much joy, as I would a stale wench to a new cully; nay, with as much joy as I would after the first night, if I had been married to you. There's for you; and so your servant, servant. [*Exit.*

Alith. How was I deceived in a man!

Lucy. You'll believe then a fool may be made jealous now? for that easiness in him that suffers him to be led by a wife, will likewise permit him to be persuaded against her by others.

Alith. But marry Mr. Horner! my brother does not intend it, sure: if I thought he did, I would take thy advice, and Mr. Harcourt for my husband. And now I wish, that if there be any over-wise woman of the town, who, like me, would marry a fool for fortune, liberty, or title, first, that her husband may love play, and be a cully to all the town but her, and suffer none but Fortune to be mistress of his purse; then, if for liberty, that he may send her into the country, under the conduct of some huswifely mother-in-law; and if for title, may the world give 'em none but that of cuckold.

Lucy. And for her greater curse, madam, may he not deserve it.

Alith. Away, impertinent! Is not this my old lady Lanterlu's?

Lucy. Yes, madam.—[*Aside.*] And here I hope we shall find Mr. Harcourt. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—HORNER'S *Lodging. A Table, Banquet, and Bottles.*

Enter HORNER, LADY FIDGET, MRS. DAINTY FIDGET, *and* MRS. SQUEAMISH.

Horn. A pox! they are come too soon—before I have sent back my new mistress. All that I have now to do is to lock her in, that they may not see her. [*Aside.*

Lady Fidg. That we may be sure of our welcome, we have brought our entertainment with us, and are resolved to treat thee, dear toad.

Dain. And that we may be merry to purpose, have left sir Jasper and my old lady Squeamish, quarrelling at home at backgammon.

Mrs. Squeam. Therefore let us make use of our time, lest they should chance to interrupt us.

Lady Fidg. Let us sit then.

Horn. First, that you may be private, let me lock this door and that, and I'll wait upon you presently.

Lady Fidg. No, sir, shut 'em only, and your lips for ever; for we must trust you as much as our women.

Horn. You know all vanity's killed in me; I have no occasion for talking.

Lady Fidg. Now, ladies, supposing we had drank each of us our two bottles, let us speak the truth of our hearts.

Dain. and Mrs. Squeam. Agreed.

Lady Fidg. By this brimmer, for truth is nowhere else to be found—[*Aside to* HORNER.] not in thy heart, false man!

Horn. You have found me a true man, I'm sure. [*Aside to* LADY FIDGET.

Lady Fidg. [*Aside to* HORNER.] Not every way.—But let us sit and be merry. [*Sings.*

Why should our damn'd tyrants oblige us to live
On the pittance of pleasure which they only give?
We must not rejoice
With wine and with noise;
In vain we must wake in a dull bed alone,
Whilst to our warm rival the bottle they're gone.
Then lay aside charms,
And take up these arms[1].

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[1] The glasses.

'Tis wine only gives 'em their courage and wit,
Because we live sober, to men we submit.
If for beauties you'd pass,
Take a lick of the glass,
'Twill mend your complexions, and when they are gone,
The best red we have is the red of the grape:
Then, sisters, lay't on,
And damn a good shape.

Dain. Dear brimmer! Well, in token of our openness and plain-dealing, let us throw our masks over our heads.

Horn. So, 'twill come to the glasses anon. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Squeam. Lovely brimmer! let me enjoy him first.

Lady Fidg. No, I never part with a gallant till I've tried him. Dear brimmer! that makest our husbands short-sighted.

Dain. And our bashful gallants bold.

Mrs. Squeam. And, for want of a gallant, the butler lovely in our eyes.—Drink, eunuch.

Lady Fidg. Drink, thou representative of a husband.—Damn a husband!

Dain. And, as it were a husband, an old keeper.

Mrs. Squeam. And an old grandmother.

Horn. And an English bawd, and a French surgeon.

Lady Fidg. Ay, we have all reason to curse 'em.

Horn. For my sake, ladies?

Lady Fidg. No, for our own; for the first spoils all young gallants' industry.

Dain. And the other's art makes 'em bold only with common women.

Mrs. Squeam. And rather run the hazard of the vile distemper amongst them, than of a denial amongst us.

Dain. The filthy toads choose mistresses now as they do stuffs, for having been fancied and worn by others.

Mrs. Squeam. For being common and cheap.

Lady Fidg. Whilst women of quality, like the richest stuffs, lie untumbled, and unasked for.

Horn. Ay, neat, and cheap, and new, often they think best.

Dain. No, sir, the beasts will be known by a mistress longer than by a suit.

Mrs. Squeam. And 'tis not for cheapness neither.

Lady Fidg. No; for the vain fops will take up druggets, and embroider 'em. But I wonder at the depraved appetites of witty men; they use to be out of the common road, and hate imitation. Pray tell me, beast, when you were a man, why you rather chose to club with a multitude in a common house for an entertainment, than to be the only guest at a good table.

Horn. Why, faith, ceremony and expectation are unsufferable to those that are sharp bent. People always eat with the best stomach at an ordinary, where every man is snatching for the best bit.

Lady Fidg. Though he get a cut over the fingers.—But I have heard, that people eat most heartily of another man's meat, that is, what they do not pay for.

Horn. When they are sure of their welcome and freedom; for ceremony in love and eating is as ridiculous as in fighting: falling on briskly is all should be done on those occasions.

Lady Fidg. Well then, let me tell you, sir, there is no where more freedom than in our houses; and we take freedom from a young person as a sign of good breeding; and a person may be as free as he pleases with us, as frolic, as gamesome, as wild as he will.

Horn. Han't I heard you all declaim against wild men?

Lady Fidg. Yes; but for all that, we think wildness in a man as desirable a quality as in a duck or rabbit: a tame man! foh!

Horn. I know not, but your reputations frightened me as much as your faces invited me.

Lady Fidg. Our reputation! Lord, why should you not think that we women make use of our reputation, as you men of yours, only to deceive the world with less suspicion? Our virtue is like the statesman's religion, the quaker's word, the gamester's oath, and the great man's honour; but to cheat those that trust us.

Mrs. Squeam. And that demureness, coyness, and modesty, that you see in our faces in the boxes at plays, is as much a sign of a kind woman, as a vizard-mask in the pit.

Dain. For, I assure you, women are least masked when they have the velvet vizard on.

Lady Fidg. You would have found us modest women in our denials only.

Mrs. Squeam. Our bashfulness is only the reflection of the men's.

Dain. We blush when they are shamefaced.

Horn. I beg your pardon, ladies, I was deceived in you devilishly. But why that mighty pretence to honour?

Lady Fidg. We have told you; but sometimes 'twas for the same reason you men pretend business often, to avoid ill company, to enjoy the better and more privately those you love.

Horn. But why would you ne'er give a friend a wink then?

Lady Fidg. Faith, your reputation frightened us, as much as ours did you, you were so notoriously lewd.

Horn. And you so seemingly honest.

Lady Fidg. Was that all that deterred you?

Horn. And so expensive—you allow freedom, you say.

Lady Fidg. Ay, ay.

Horn. That I was afraid of losing my little money, as well as my little time, both which my other pleasures required.

Lady Fidg. Money! foh! you talk like a little fellow now: do such as we expect money?

Horn. I beg your pardon, madam, I must confess, I have heard that great ladies, like great merchants, set but the higher prizes upon what they have, because they are not in necessity of taking the first offer.

Dain. Such as we make sale of our hearts?

Mrs. Squeam. We bribed for our love? foh!

Horn. With your pardon, ladies, I know, like great men in offices, you seem to exact flattery and attendance only from your followers; but you have receivers about you, and such fees to pay, a man is afraid to pass your grants. Besides, we must let you win at cards, or we lose your hearts; and if you make an assignation, 'tis at a goldsmith's, jeweller's, or china-house; where for your honour you deposit to him, he must pawn his to the punctual cit, and so paying for what you take up, pays for what he takes up.

Dain. Would you not have us assured of our gallants' love?

Mrs. Squeam. For love is better known by liberality than by jealousy.

Lady Fidg. For one may be dissembled, the other not.—[*Aside.*] But my jealousy can be no longer dissembled, and they are telling ripe.—[*Aloud.*]—Come, here's to our gallants in waiting, whom we must name, and I'll begin. This is my false rogue. [*Claps him on the back.*

Mrs. Squeam. How!

Horn. So, all will out now. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Squeam. Did you not tell me, 'twas for my sake only you reported yourself no man? [*Aside to* HORNER.

Dain. Oh, wretch! did you not swear to me, 'twas for my love and honour you passed for that thing you do? [*Aside to* HORNER.

Horn. So, so.

Lady Fidg. Come, speak, ladies: this is my false villain.

Mrs. Squeam. And mine too.

Dain. And mine.

Horn. Well then, you are all three my false rogues too, and there's an end on't.

Lady Fidg. Well then, there's no remedy; sister sharers, let us not fall out, but have a care of our honour. Though we get no presents, no jewels of him, we are savers of our honour, the jewel of most value and use, which shines yet to the world unsuspected, though it be counterfeit.

Horn. Nay, and is e'en as good as if it were true, provided the world think so; for honour, like beauty now, only depends on the opinion of others.

Lady Fidg. Well, Harry Common, I hope you can be true to three. Swear; but 'tis to no purpose to require your oath, for you are as often forsworn as you swear to new women.

Horn. Come, faith, madam, let us e'en pardon one another; for all the difference I find betwixt we men and you women, we forswear ourselves at the beginning of an amour, you as long as it lasts.

Enter SIR JASPER FIDGET, *and* OLD LADY SQUEAMISH.

Sir Jasp. Oh, my lady Fidget, was this your cunning, to come to Mr. Horner without me? but you have been nowhere else, I hope.

Lady Fidg. No, sir Jasper.

Lady Squeam. And you came straight hither, Biddy?

Mrs. Squeam. Yes, indeed, lady grandmother.

Sir Jasp. 'Tis well, 'tis well; I knew when once they were thoroughly acquainted with poor Horner, they'd ne'er be from him: you may let her masquerade it with my wife and Horner, and I warrant her reputation safe.

Enter BOY.

Boy. O, sir, here's the gentleman come, whom you bid me not suffer to come up, without giving you notice, with a lady too, and other gentlemen.

Horn. Do you all go in there, whilst I send 'em away; and, boy, do you desire 'em to stay below till I come, which shall be immediately.

[*Exeunt* SIR JASPER FIDGET, LADY FIDGET, LADY SQUEAMISH, MRS. SQUEAMISH, *and* MRS. DAINTY FIDGET.

Boy. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

[*Exit* HORNER *at the other door, and returns with* MRS. PINCHWIFE.

Horn. You would not take my advice, to be gone home before your husband came back, he'll now discover all; yet pray, my dearest, be persuaded to go home, and leave the rest to my management; I'll let you down the back way.

Mrs. Pinch. I don't know the way home, so I don't.

Horn. My man shall wait upon you.

Mrs. Pinch. No, don't you believe that I'll go at all; what, are you weary of me already?

Horn. No, my life, 'tis that I may love you long, 'tis to secure my love, and your reputation with your husband; he'll never receive you again else.

Mrs. Pinch. What care I? d'ye think to frighten me with that? I don't intend to go to him again; you shall be my husband now.

Horn. I cannot be your husband, dearest, since you are married to him.

Mrs. Pinch. O, would you make me believe that? Don't I see every day at London here, women leave their first husbands, and go and live with other men as their wives? pish, pshaw! you'd make me angry, but that I love you so mainly.

Horn. So, they are coming up—In again, in, I hear 'em.—[*Exit* MRS. PINCHWIFE.] Well, a silly mistress is like a weak place, soon got, soon lost, a man has scarce time for plunder; she betrays her husband first to her gallant, and then her gallant to her husband.

Enter MR. PINCHWIFE, ALITHEA, HARCOURT, SPARKISH, LUCY, *and a* PARSON.

Pinch. Come, madam, 'tis not the sudden change of your dress, the confidence of your asseverations, and your false witness there, shall persuade me I did not bring you hither just now; here's my witness, who cannot deny it, since you must be confronted.—Mr. Horner, did not I bring this lady to you just now?

Horn. Now must I wrong one woman for another's sake,—but that's no new thing with me, for in these cases I am still on the criminal's side against the innocent. [*Aside.*

Alith. Pray speak, sir.

Horn. It must be so. I must be impudent, and try my luck; impudence uses to be too hard for truth. [*Aside.*

Pinch. What, you are studying an evasion or excuse for her! Speak, sir.

Horn. No, faith, I am something backward only to speak in women's affairs or disputes.

Pinch. She bids you speak.

Alith. Ay, pray, sir, do, pray satisfy him.

Horn. Then truly, you did bring that lady to me just now.

Pinch. O ho!

Alith. How, sir?

Har. How, Horner?

Alith. What mean you, sir? I always took you for a man of honour.

Har. Ay, so much a man of honour, that I must save my mistress, I thank you, come what will on't. [*Aside.*

Spark. So, if I had had her, she'd have made me believe the moon had been made of a Christmas pie.

Lucy. Now could I speak, if I durst, and solve the riddle, who am the author of it. [*Aside.*

Alith. O unfortunate woman! A combination against my honour! which most concerns me now, because you share in my disgrace, sir, and it is

your censure, which I must now suffer, that troubles me, not theirs.

Har. Madam, then have no trouble, you shall now see 'tis possible for me to love too, without being jealous; I will not only believe your innocence myself, but make all the world believe it.—[*Aside to* HORNER.] Horner, I must now be concerned for his lady's honour.

Horn. And I must be concerned for a lady's honour too.

Har. This lady has her honour, and I will protect it.

Horn. My lady has not her honour, but has given it me to keep, and I will preserve it.

Har. I understand you not.

Horn. I would not have you.

Mrs. Pinch. What's the matter with 'em all? [*Peeping in behind.*

Pinch. Come, come, Mr. Horner, no more disputing; here's the parson, I brought him not in vain.

Horn. No, sir, I'll employ him, if this lady please.

Pinch. How! what d'ye mean?

Spark. Ay, what does he mean?

Horn. Why, I have resigned your sister to him, he has my consent.

Pinch. But he has not mine, sir; a woman's injured honour, no more than a man's, can be repaired or satisfied by any but him that first wronged it; and you shall marry her presently, or— [*Lays his hand on his sword.*

Re-enter MRS. PINCHWIFE.

Mrs. Pinch. O Lord, they'll kill poor Mr. Horner! besides, he shan't marry her whilst I stand by, and look on; I'll not lose my second husband so.

Pinch. What do I see?

Alith. My sister in my clothes!

Spark. Ha!

Mrs. Pinch. Nay, pray now don't quarrel about finding work for the parson, he shall marry me to Mr. Horner; for now, I believe, you have enough of me. [*To* MR. PINCHWIFE.

Horn. Damned, damned loving changeling! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Pinch. Pray, sister, pardon me for telling so many lies of you.

Horn. I suppose the riddle is plain now.

Lucy. No, that must be my work.—Good sir, hear me.

[*Kneels to* MR. PINCHWIFE, *who stands doggedly with his hat over his eyes.*

Pinch. I will never hear woman again, but make 'em all silent thus— [*Offers to draw upon his wife.*

Horn. No, that must not be.

Pinch. You then shall go first, 'tis all one to me. [*Offers to draw on* HORNER, *stopped by* HARCOURT.

Har. Hold!

Re-enter SIR JASPER FIDGET, LADY FIDGET, LADY SQUEAMISH, MRS. DAINTY FIDGET, *and* MRS. SQUEAMISH.

Sir Jasp. What's the matter? what's the matter? pray, what's the matter, sir? I beseech you communicate, sir.

Pinch. Why, my wife has communicated, sir, as your wife may have done too, sir, if she knows him, sir.

Sir Jasp. Pshaw, with him! ha! ha! he!

Pinch. D'ye mock me, sir? a cuckold is a kind of a wild beast; have a care, sir.

Sir Jasp. No, sure, you mock me, sir. He cuckold you! it can't be, ha! ha! he! why, I'll tell you, sir— [*Offers to whisper.*

Pinch. I tell you again, he has whored my wife, and yours too, if he knows her, and all the women he comes near; 'tis not his dissembling, his hypocrisy, can wheedle me.

Sir Jasp. How! does he dissemble? is he a hypocrite? Nay, then—how—wife—sister, is he a hypocrite?

Lady Squeam. A hypocrite! a dissembler! Speak, young harlotry, speak, how?

Sir Jasp. Nay, then—O my head too!—O thou libidinous lady!

Lady Squeam. O thou harloting harlotry! hast thou done't then?

Sir Jasp. Speak, good Horner, art thou a dissembler, a rogue? hast thou—

Horn. So!

Lucy. I'll fetch you off, and her too, if she will but hold her tongue. [*Apart to* HORNER.

Horn. Canst thou? I'll give thee— [*Apart to* LUCY.

Lucy. [*To* MR. PINCHWIFE.] Pray have but patience to hear me, sir, who am the unfortunate cause of all this confusion. Your wife is innocent, I only culpable; for I put her upon telling you all these lies concerning my mistress, in order to the breaking off the match beween Mr. Sparkish and her, to make way for Mr. Harcourt.

Spark. Did you so, eternal rotten tooth? Then, it seems, my mistress was not false to me, I was only deceived by you. Brother, that should have been, now man of conduct, who is a frank person now, to bring your wife to her lover, ha?

Lucy. I assure you, sir, she came not to Mr. Horner out of love, for she loves him no more—

Mrs. Pinch. Hold, I told lies for you, but you shall tell none for me, for I do love Mr. Horner with all my soul, and nobody shall say me nay; pray, don't you go to make poor Mr. Horner believe to the contrary; 'tis spitefully done of you, I'm sure.

Horn. Peace, dear idiot. [*Aside to* MRS. PINCHWIFE.

Mrs. Pinch. Nay, I will not peace.

Pinch. Not till I make you.

Enter DORILANT *and* QUACK.

Dor. Horner, your servant; I am the doctor's guest, he must excuse our intrusion.

Quack. But what's the matter, gentlemen? for heaven's sake, what's the matter?

Horn. Oh, 'tis well you are come. 'Tis a censorious world we live in; you may have brought me a reprieve, or else I had died for a crime I never committed, and these innocent ladies had suffered with me; therefore, pray satisfy these worthy, honourable, jealous gentlemen—that— [*Whispers.*

Quack. O, I understand you, is that all?—Sir Jasper, by heavens, and upon the word of a physician, sir— [*Whispers to* SIR JASPER.

Sir Jasp. Nay, I do believe you truly.—Pardon me, my virtuous lady, and dear of honour.

Lady Squeam. What, then all's right again?

Sir Jasp. Ay, ay, and now let us satisfy him too. [*They whisper with* MR. PINCHWIFE.

Pinch. A eunuch! Pray, no fooling with me.

Quack. I'll bring half the chirurgeons in town to swear it.

Pinch. They!—they'll swear a man that bled to death through his wounds, died of an apoplexy.

Quack. Pray, hear me, sir—why, all the town has heard the report of him.

Pinch. But does all the town believe it?

Quack. Pray, inquire a little, and first of all these.

Pinch. I'm sure when I left the town, he was the lewdest fellow in't.

Quack. I tell you, sir, he has been in France since; pray, ask but these ladies and gentlemen, your friend Mr. Dorilant. Gentlemen and ladies, han't you all heard the late sad report of poor Mr. Horner?

All Ladies. Ay, ay, ay.

Dor. Why, thou jealous fool, dost thou doubt it? he's an arrant French capon.

Mrs. Pinch. 'Tis false, sir, you shall not disparage poor Mr. Horner, for to my certain knowledge—

Lucy. O, hold!

Mrs. Squeam. Stop her mouth! [*Aside to* LUCY.

Lady Fidg. Upon my honour, sir, 'tis as true— [*To* MR. PINCHWIFE.

Dain. D'ye think we would have been seen in his company?

Mrs. Squeam. Trust our unspotted reputations with him?

Lady Fidg. This you get, and we too, by trusting your secret to a fool. [*Aside to* HORNER.

Horn. Peace, madam.—[*Aside to* Quack.] Well, doctor, is not this a good design, that carries a man on unsuspected, and brings him off safe?

Pinch. Well, if this were true—but my wife— [*Aside.*

[DORILANT *whispers with* MRS. PINCHWIFE.

Alith. Come, brother, your wife is yet innocent, you see; but have a care of too strong an imagination, lest, like an over-concerned timorous gamester, by fancying an unlucky cast, it should come. Women and fortune are truest still to those that trust 'em.

Lucy. And any wild thing grows but the more fierce and hungry for being kept up, and more dangerous to the keeper.

Alith. There's doctrine for all husbands, Mr. Harcourt.

Har. I edify, madam, so much, that I am impatient till I am one.

Dor. And I edify so much by example, I will never be one.

Spark. And because I will not disparage my parts, I'll ne'er be one.

Horn. And I, alas! can't be one.

Pinch. But I must be one—against my will to a country wife, with a country murrain to me!

Mrs. Pinch. And I must be a country wife still too, I find; for I can't, like a city one, be rid of my musty husband, and do what I list. [*Aside.*

Horn. Now, sir, I must pronounce your wife innocent, though I blush whilst I do it; and I am the only man by her now exposed to shame, which I will straight drown in wine, as you shall your suspicion; and the ladies' troubles we'll divert with a ballad.—Doctor, where are your maskers?

Lucy. Indeed, she's innocent, sir, I am her witness; and her end of coming out was but to see her sister's wedding; and what she has said to your face of her love to Mr. Horner, was but the usual innocent revenge on a husband's jealousy;—was it not, madam, speak?

Mrs. Pinch. [*Aside to* LUCY *and* HORNER.] Since you'll have me tell more lies—[*Aloud.*] Yes, indeed, bud.

Pinch. For my own sake fain I would all believe;
Cuckolds, like lovers, should themselves deceive.
But— [*Sighs.*
His honour is least safe (too late I find)
Who trusts it with a foolish wife or friend.

A Dance of Cuckolds.

Horn. Vain fops but court and dress, and keep a pother,
To pass for women's men with one another;
But he who aims by women to be prized,
First by the men, you see, must be despised.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY MRS. KNEP.

Now you the vigorous, who daily here
O'er vizard-mask in public domineer,
And what you'd do to her, if in place where;
Nay, have the confidence to cry, *Come out!*
Yet when she says, *Lead on!* you are not stout;
But to your well-dress'd brother straight turn round,
And cry, *Pox on her, Ned, she can't be sound!*
Then slink away, a fresh one to engage,
With so much seeming heat and loving rage,
You'd frighten listening actress on the stage;
Till she at last has seen you huffing come,
And talk of keeping in the tiring-room,
Yet cannot be provoked to lead her home.
Next, you Falstaffs of fifty, who beset
Your buckram maidenheads, which your friends get;
And whilst to them you of achievements boast,
They share the booty, and laugh at your cost.
In fine, you essenced boys, both old and young,
Who would be thought so eager, brisk, and strong,
Yet do the ladies, not their husbands wrong;
Whose purses for your manhood make excuse,
And keep your Flanders mares for show not use;
Encouraged by our woman's man to-day,
A Horner's part may vainly think to play;
And may intrigues so bashfully disown,
That they may doubted be by few or none;
May kiss the cards at picquet, ombre, loo,
And so be taught to kiss the lady too;
But, gallants, have a care, faith, what you do.
The world, which to no man his due will give,
You by experience know you can deceive,
And men may still believe you vigorous,
But then we women—there's no cozening us.

THE PLAIN DEALER.

A Comedy.

————————— Ridiculum acri
Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res.—HORAT.

TO MY LADY B * *.

MADAM,—Though I never had the honour to receive a favour from you, nay, or be known to you, I take the confidence of an author to write to you a *billet-doux* dedicatory;—which is no new thing. For by most dedications it appears that authors, though they praise their patrons from top to toe, and seem to turn 'em inside out, know 'em as little as sometimes their patrons their books, though they read them out; and if the poetical daubers did not write the name of the man or woman on top of the picture, 'twere impossible to guess whose it were. But you, Madam, without the help of a poet, have made yourself known and famous in the world; and because you do not want it, are therefore most worthy of an epistle dedicatory. And this play claims naturally your protection, since it has lost its reputation with the ladies of stricter lives in the playhouse; and, you know, when men's endeavours are discountenanced and refused by the nice coy women of honour, they come to you:—to you, the great and noble patroness of rejected and bashful men (of which number I profess myself to be one, though a poet, a dedicating poet), to you, I say, Madam, who have as discerning a judgment, in what's obscene or not, as any quick-sighted civil person of 'em all, and can make as much of a double-meaning saying as the best of 'em; yet would not, as some do, make nonsense of a poet's jest, rather than not make it bawdy; by which they show, they as little value wit in a play as in a lover, provided they can bring t'other thing about. Their sense, indeed, lies all one way, and therefore are only for that in a poet, which is moving, as they say. But what do they mean by that word *moving?* Well, I must not put 'em to the blush, since I find I can do't. In short, Madam, you would not be one of those who ravish a poet's innocent words, and make 'em guilty of their own naughtiness (as 'tis termed) in spite of his teeth. Nay, nothing is secure from the power of their imaginations, no, not their husbands, whom they cuckold with themselves, by thinking of other men; and so make the lawful matrimonial embraces adultery, wrong husbands and poets in thought and word, to keep their own reputations. But your ladyship's justice, I know, would think a woman's arraigning and damning a poet for her own obscenity like her crying out a rape, and hanging a man for giving her pleasure, only that she might be thought not to consent to't; and so to vindicate her honour, forfeits her modesty. But you, Madam, have too much modesty to pretend to't, though you have as much to say for your modesty as many a nicer she: for you never were seen at this play, no, not the first day; and 'tis no matter what people's lives have been, they are unquestionably modest who frequent not this play. For, as Mr. Bayes says of his, That it is the only touchstone of men's wit and understanding; mine is, it seems, the only touchstone of women's virtue and modesty. But hold, that touchstone is equivocal, and, by the strength of a lady's imagination, may become something that is not civil: but your ladyship, I know, scorns to misapply a touchstone. And, Madam, though you have not seen this play, I hope (like other nice ladies) you will the rather read it. Yet, lest the chambermaid or page should not be trusted, and their indulgence could gain no further admittances for it than to their ladies' lobbies or outward rooms, take it into your care and protection; for by your recommendation and procurement, it may have the honour to get into their closets; for what they renounce in public, often entertains 'em there, with your help especially. In fine, Madam, for these and many other reasons, you are the fittest patroness or judge of this play; for you show no partiality to this or that author. For from some many ladies will take a broad jest as cheerfully as from the watermen, and sit at some downright filthy plays (as they call 'em) as well satisfied, and as still, as a poet could wish 'em elsewhere. Therefore it must be the doubtful obscenity of my play alone they take exceptions at, because it is too bashful for 'em: and, indeed, most women hate men for attempting by halves on their chastity; and bawdy, I find, like satire, should be home, not to have it taken notice of. But, now I mention satire, some there are who say, 'Tis the plain-dealing of the play, not the obscenity; 'tis taking off the ladies' masks, not offering at their petticoats, which offends 'em:—and generally they are not the handsomest, or most innocent, who are the most angry at their being discovered:—

————————— Nihil est audacius illis
Deprensis; iram atque animos a crimine sumunt.

Pardon, Madam, the quotation; for a dedication can no more be without ends of Latin, than flattery: and 'tis no matter whom it is writ to; for an author can as easily, I hope, suppose people to have more understanding and languages than they have, as well as more virtues. But why, the devil, should any of the few modest and handsome be alarmed?—for some there are, who, as well as any, deserve those attributes, yet refrain not from seeing this play, nor think it any addition to their virtue to set up for it in a playhouse, lest there it should look too much like acting—but why, I say, should any at all of the truly virtuous be concerned, if those who are not so are distinguished from 'em? for by that mask of modesty which women wear promiscuously in public, they are all alike; and you can no more know a kept wench from a woman of honour by her looks than by her dress. For those who are of quality without honour (if any such there are) they have their quality to set off their false modesty, as well as their false jewels; and you must no more suspect their countenances for counterfeit than their pendants, though as the plain dealer Montaigne says, *Els envoy leur conscience au bordel, et tiennent leur continence en règle.* But those who act as they look, ought not to be scandalised at the reprehension of others' faults, lest they tax themselves with 'em, and by too delicate and quick an apprehension not only make that obscene which I meant innocent, but that satire on all, which was intended only on those who

deserved it. But, Madam, I beg your pardon for this digression to civil women and ladies of honour, since you and I shall never be the better for 'em: for a comic poet and a lady of your profession make most of the other sort; and the stage and your houses, like our plantations, are propagated by the least nice women; and, as with the ministers of justice, the vices of the age are our best business. But now I mention public persons, I can no longer defer doing you the justice of a dedication, and telling you your own, who are, of all public-spirited people, the most necessary, most communicative, most generous and hospitable. Your house has been the house of the people; your sleep still disturbed for the public; and when you arose, 'twas that others might lie down; and you waked that others might rest: the good you have done is unspeakable. How many young inexperienced heirs have you kept from rash foolish marriages, and from being jilted for their lives by the worst sort of jilts, wives! How many unbewitched widowers' children have you preserved from the tyranny of stepmothers! How many old doters from cuckoldom, and keeping other men's wenches and children! How many adulteries and unnatural sins have you prevented! In fine, you have been a constant scourge to the old lecher, and often a terror to the young: you have made concupiscence its own punishment, and extinguished lust with lust, like blowing up of houses to stop the fire.

Nimirum propter continentiam, incontinentia
Necessaria est, incendium ignibus extinguitur.

There's Latin for you again, Madam: I protest to you, as I am an author, I cannot help it; nay, I can hardly keep myself from quoting Aristotle and Horace, and talking to you of the rules of writing, (like the French authors), to show you and my reader I understand 'em, in my epistle, lest neither of you should find it out by the play. And according to the rules of dedications, 'tis no matter whether you understand or no what I quote or say to you of writing; for an author can as easily make any one a judge or critic in an epistle, as a hero in his play. But, Madam, that this may prove to the end a true epistle dedicatory, I'd have you know 'tis not without a design upon you, which is in the behalf of the fraternity of Parnassus; that songs and sonnets may go at your houses, and in your liberties, for guineas and half-guineas; and that wit, at least with you, as of old, may be the price of beauty, and so you will prove a true encourager of poetry; for love is a better help to it than wine; and poets, like painters, draw better after the life than by fancy. Nay, in justice, Madam, I think a poet ought to be as free of your houses, as of the playhouses; since he contributes to the support of both, and is as necessary to such as you, as a ballad-singer to a pick-purse, in convening the cullies at the theatres, to be picked up and carried to supper and bed at your houses. And, Madam, the reason of this motion of mine is, because poor poets can get no favour in the tiring-rooms, for they are no keepers, you know; and folly and money, the old enemies of wit, are even too hard for it on its own dunghill: and for other ladies, a poet can least go to the price of them. Besides, his wit, which ought to recommend him to 'em, is as much an obstruction to his love, as to his wealth or preferment; for most women now-a-days apprehend wit in a lover, as much as in a husband; they hate a man that knows 'em, they must have a blind easy fool, whom they can lead by the nose; and, as the Scythian women of old, must baffle a man, and put out his eyes, ere they will lie with him; and then too like thieves, when they have plundered and stripped a man, leave him. But if there should be one of a hundred of those ladies generous enough to give herself to a man that has more wit than money, (all things considered,) he would think it cheaper coming to you for a mistress, though you made him pay his guinea; as a man in a journey (out of good husbandry), had better pay for what he has at an inn, than lie on free-cost at a gentleman's house.

In fine, Madam, like a faithful dedicator, I hope I have done myself right in the first place; then you, and your profession, which in the wisest and most religious government in the world is honoured with the public allowance; and in those that are thought the most uncivilised and barbarous is protected and supported by the ministers of justice. And of you, Madam, I ought to say no more here, for your virtues deserve a poem rather than an epistle, or a volume entire to give the world your memoirs, or life at large; and which (upon the word of an author that has a mind to make an end of his dedication) I promise to do, when I write the annals of our British love, which shall be dedicated to the ladies concerned, if they will not think them something too obscene too; when your life, compared with many that are thought innocent, I doubt not, may vindicate you, and me, to the world, for the confidence I have taken in this address to you; which then may be thought neither impertinent nor immodest; and, whatsoever your amorous misfortunes have been, none can charge you with that heinous, and worst of women's crimes, hypocrisy; nay, in spite of misfortunes or age, you are the same woman still; though most of your sex grow Magdalens at fifty, and as a solid French author has it—

Après le plaisir, vient la peine;
Après la peine, la vertu.

But sure an old sinner's continency is much like a gamester's forswearing play, when he had lost all his money; and modesty is a kind of a youthful dress, which, as it makes a young woman more amiable, makes an old one more nauseous: a bashful old woman is like a hopeful old man; and the affected chastity of antiquated beauties is rather a reproach than an honour to 'em; for it shows the men's virtue only, not theirs. But you, in fine, Madam, are no more a hypocrite than I am when I praise you; therefore I doubt not will be thought (even by yours and the play's enemies, the nicest ladies) to be the fittest patroness for, Madam, your ladyship's most obedient, faithful, humble servant, and

THE PLAIN DEALER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MANLY, *of an honest, surly, nice Humour, supposed first, in the Time of the Dutch War, to have procured the Command of a Ship, out of Honour, not Interest; and choosing a Sea-life only to avoid the World.*

FREEMAN, MANLY'S *Lieutenant, a Gentleman well educated, but of a broken Fortune, a Complier with the Age.*

VERNISH, MANLY'S *bosom and only Friend.*

NOVEL, *a pert railing Coxcomb, and an Admirer of Novelties, makes love to* OLIVIA.

MAJOR OLDFOX, *an old impertinent Fop, given to scribbling, makes Love to the* WIDOW BLACKACRE.

LORD PLAUSIBLE, *a ceremonious, supple, commending Coxcomb, in love with* OLIVIA.

JERRY BLACKACRE, *a true raw Squire, under Age, and his Mother's Government, bred to the Law.*

OLIVIA, MANLY'S *Mistress.*

FIDELIA, *in love with* MANLY, *and followed him to Sea in Man's Clothes.*

ELIZA, *Cousin to* OLIVIA.

LETTICE, OLIVIA'S *Woman.*

WIDOW BLACKACRE, *a petulant, litigious Widow, always in Law, and Mother to Squire* JERRY.

Lawyers, Knights of the Post, Bailiffs *and* Aldermen, *a Bookseller's* Apprentice, *a* Foot-boy, Sailors, Waiters, *and* Attendants.

SCENE,—LONDON.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY THE PLAIN DEALER.

I THE Plain Dealer am to act to-day,
And my rough part begins before the play.
First, you who scribble, yet hate all that write,
And keep each other company in spite,
As rivals in your common mistress, fame,
And with faint praises one another damn;
'Tis a good play, we know, you can't forgive,
But grudge yourselves the pleasure you receive:
Our scribbler therefore bluntly bid me say,
He would not have the wits pleased here to-day.
Next, you, the fine, loud gentlemen o' th' pit,
Who damn all plays, yet, if y'ave any wit,
'Tis but what here you spunge and daily get;
Poets, like friends to whom you are in debt,
You hate; and so rooks laugh, to see undone
Those pushing gamesters whom they live upon.
Well, you are sparks, and still will be i'th' fashion;
Rail then at plays, to hide your obligation.
Now, you shrewd judges, who the boxes sway,
Leading the ladies' hearts and sense astray,
And, for their sakes, see all, and hear no play;
Correct your cravats, foretops, lock behind;
The dress and breeding of the play ne'er mind;
Plain dealing is, you'll say, quite out of fashion;
You'll hate it here, as in a dedication:
And your fair neighbours, in a limning poet
No more than in a painter will allow it.
Pictures too like the ladies will not please;
They must be drawn too here like goddesses.
You, as at Lely's too, would truncheon wield,
And look like heroes in a painted field.
But the coarse dauber of the coming scenes,
To follow life and nature only means,
Displays you as you are, makes his fine woman
A mercenary jilt, and true to no man:
His men of wit and pleasure of the age
Are as dull rogues as ever cumber'd stage:
He draws a friend only to custom just,
And makes him naturally break his trust.
I only act a part, like none of you,
And yet you'll say, it is a fool's part too:
An honest man who, like you, never winks
At faults; but, unlike you, speaks what he thinks:
The only fool who ne'er found patron yet,
For truth is now a fault as well as wit.
And where else, but on stages, do we see
Truth pleasing, or rewarded honesty?
Which our bold poet does this day in me.
If not to th' honest, be to th' prosperous kind,
Some friends at court let the Plain Dealer find.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—MANLY'S *Lodging.*

Enter MANLY, *surlily, my* Lord PLAUSIBLE *following him; and two* Sailors *behind.*

Man. Tell not me, my good lord Plausible, of your decorums, supercilious forms, and slavish ceremonies! your little tricks, which you, the spaniels of the world, do daily over and over, for and to one another; not out of love or duty, but your servile fear.

Plaus. Nay, i'faith, i'faith, you are too passionate; and I must humbly beg your pardon and leave to tell you, they are the arts and rules the prudent of the world walk by.

Man. Let 'em. But I'll have no leading-strings; I can walk alone: I hate a harness, and will not tug on in a faction, kissing my leader behind, that another slave may do the like to me.

Plaus. What, will you be singular then, like nobody? follow, love, and esteem nobody?

Man. Rather than be general, like you, follow everybody; court and kiss everybody; though perhaps at the same time you hate everybody.

Plaus. Why, seriously, with your pardon, my dear friend—

Man. With your pardon, my no friend, I will not, as you do, whisper my hatred or my scorn; call a man fool or knave by signs or mouths over his shoulder, whilst you have him in your arms.—For such as you, like common whores and pickpockets, are only dangerous to those you embrace.

Plaus. Such as I! Heavens defend me!—upon my honour—

Man. Upon your title, my lord, if you'd have me believe you.

Plaus. Well, then, as I am a person of honour, I never attempted to abuse or lessen any person in my life.

Man. What, you were afraid?

Plaus. No; but seriously, I hate to do a rude thing: no, faith, I speak well of all mankind.

Man. I thought so: but know, that speaking well of all mankind is the worst kind of detraction; for it takes away the reputation of the few good men in the world, by making all alike. Now, I speak ill of most men, because they deserve it; I that can do a rude thing, rather than an unjust thing.

Plaus. Well, tell not me, my dear friend, what people deserve; I ne'er mind that. I, like an author in a dedication, never speak well of a man for his sake, but my own; I will not disparage any man, to disparage myself: for to speak ill of people behind their backs, is not like a person of honour; and, truly, to speak ill of 'em to their faces, is not like a complaisant person. But if I did say or do an ill thing to anybody, it should be sure to be behind their backs, out of pure good manners.

Man. Very well; but I, that am an unmannerly sea-fellow, if I ever speak well of people, (which is very seldom indeed,) it should be sure to be behind their backs; and if I would say or do ill to any, it should be to their faces. I would jostle a proud, strutting, overlooking coxcomb, at the head of his sycophants, rather than put out my tongue at him when he were past me; would frown

in the arrogant, big, dull face of an overgrown knave of business, rather than vent my spleen against him when his back were turned; would give fawning slaves the lie whilst they embrace or commend me; cowards whilst they brag; call a rascal by no other title, though his father had left him a duke's; laugh at fools aloud before their mistresses; and must desire people to leave me, when their visits grow at last as troublesome as they were at first impertinent.

Plaus. I would not have my visits troublesome.

Man. The only way to be sure not to have 'em troublesome, is to make 'em when people are not at home; for your visits, like other good turns, are most obliging when made or done to a man in his absence. A pox! why should any one, because he has nothing to do, go and disturb another man's business?

Plaus. I beg your pardon, my dear friend.—What, you have business?

Man. If you have any, I would not detain your lordship.

Plaus. Detain me, dear sir!—I can never have enough of your company.

Man. I'm afraid I should be tiresome: I know not what you think.

Plaus. Well, dear sir, I see you'd have me gone.

Man. But I see you won't. [*Aside.*

Plaus. Your most faithful—

Man. God be w'ye, my lord.

Plaus. Your most humble—

Man. Farewell.

Plaus. And eternally—

Man. And eternally ceremony—[*Aside.*] Then the devil take thee eternally.

Plaus. You shall use no ceremony, by my life.

Man. I do not intend it.

Plaus. Why do you stir then?

Man. Only to see you out of doors, that I may shut 'em against more welcomes.

Plaus. Nay, faith, that shall not pass upon your most faithful humble servant.

Man. Nor this any more upon me. [*Aside.*

Plaus. Well, you are too strong for me.

Man. [*Aside.*] I'd sooner be visited by the plague; for that only would keep a man from visits, and his doors shut.

[*Exit, thrusting out my* Lord PLAUSIBLE.

1 *Sail.* Here's a finical fellow, Jack! What a brave fair-weather captain of a ship he would make!

2 *Sail.* He a captain of a ship! it must be when she's in the dock then; for he looks like one of those that get the king's commissions for hulls to sell a king's ship, when a brave fellow has fought her almost to a long-boat.

1 *Sail.* On my conscience then, Jack, that's the reason our bully tar sunk our ship; not only that the Dutch might not have her, but that the courtiers, who laugh at wooden legs, might not make her prize.

2 *Sail.* A pox of his sinking, Tom! we have made a base, broken, short voyage of it.

1 *Sail.* Ay, your brisk dealers in honour always make quick returns with their ships to the dock, and their men to the hospitals. 'Tis, let me see, just a month since we set out of the river, and the wind was almost as cross to us as the Dutch.

2 *Sail.* Well, I forgive him sinking my own poor truck, if he would but have given me time and leave to have saved black Kate of Wapping's small venture.

1 *Sail.* Faith, I forgive him, since, as the purser told me, he sunk the value of five or six thousand pound of his own, with which he was to settle himself somewhere in the Indies; for our merry lieutenant was to succeed him in his commission for the ship back; for he was resolved never to return again for England.

2 *Sail.* So it seemed, by his fighting.

1 *Sail.* No; but he was a-weary of this side of the world here, they say.

2 *Sail.* Ay, or else he would not have bid so fair for a passage into t'other.

1 *Sail.* Jack, thou thinkest thyself in the forecastle, thou'rt so waggish. But I tell you, then, he had a mind to go live and bask himself on the sunny side of the globe.

2 *Sail.* What, out of any discontent? for he's always as dogged as an old tarpaulin, when hindered of a voyage by a young pantaloon captain.

1 *Sail.* 'Tis true I never saw him pleased but in the fight; and then he looked like one of us coming from the pay-table, with a new lining to our hats under our arms.

2 *Sail.* A pox! he's like the bay of Biscay, rough and angry, let the wind blow where 'twill.

1 *Sail.* Nay, there's no more dealing with him, than with the land in a storm, no near—

2 *Sail.* 'Tis a hurry-durry blade. Dost thou remember after we had tugged hard the old leaky long-boat to save his life, when I welcomed him ashore, he gave me a box on the ear, and called me fawning water-dog?

Re-enter MANLY *with* FREEMAN.

1 *Sail.* Hold thy peace, Jack, and stand by; the foul weather's coming.

Man. You rascals! dogs! how could this tame thing get through you?

1 *Sail.* Faith, to tell your honour the truth, we were at hob in the hall, and whilst my brother and I were quarrelling about a cast, he slunk by us.

2 *Sail.* He's a sneaking fellow I warrant for't.

Man. Have more care for the future, you slaves. Go, and with drawn cutlasses stand at the stair-foot, and keep all that ask for me from coming up; suppose you were guarding the scuttle to the powder-room. Let none enter here, at your and their peril.

1 *Sail.* No, for the danger would be the same: you would blow them and us up, if we should.

2 *Sail.* Must no one come to you, sir?

Man. No man, sir.

1 *Sail.* No man, sir; but a woman then, an't like your honour—

Man. No woman neither, you impertinent dog! Would you be pimping? a sea-pimp is the strangest monster she has.

2 *Sail.* Indeed, an't like your honour, 'twill be hard for us to deny a woman anything, since we are so newly come on shore.

1 *Sail.* We'll let no old woman come up, though it were our trusting landlady at Wapping.

Man. Would you be witty, you brandy casks you? you become a jest as ill as you do a horse. Begone, you dogs! I hear a noise on the stairs.

[*Exeunt* Sailors.

Free. Faith, I am sorry you would let the fop go, I intended to have had some sport with him.

Man. Sport with him! A pox! then, why did you not stay? You should have enjoyed your coxcomb, and had him to yourself for me.

Free. No, I should not have cared for him without you neither; for the pleasure which fops afford is like that of drinking, only good when 'tis shared; and a fool, like a bottle, which would make you merry in company, will make you dull alone. But how the devil could you turn a man of his quality down stairs? You use a lord with very little ceremony, it seems.

Man. A lord! What, thou art one of those who esteem men only by the marks and value fortune has set upon 'em, and never consider intrinsic worth! but counterfeit honour will not be current with me: I weigh the man, not his title; 'tis not the king's stamp can make the metal better or heavier. Your lord is a leaden shilling, which you bend every way, and debases the stamp he bears, instead of being raised by it.—Here again, you slaves!

Re-enter Sailors.

1 *Sail.* Only to receive farther instructions, an't like your honour.—What if a man should bring you money, should we turn him back?

Man. All men, I say: must I be pestered with you too?—You dogs, away!

2 *Sail.* Nay, I know one man your honour would not have us hinder coming to you, I'm sure.

Man. Who's that? speak quickly, slaves.!

2 *Sail.* Why, a man that should bring you a challenge. For though you refuse money, I'm sure you love fighting too well to refuse that.

Man. Rogue! rascal! dog!

[*Kicks the* Sailors *out.*

Free. Nay, let the poor rogues have their forecastle jests: they cannot help 'em in a fight, scarce when a ship's sinking.

Man. Damn their untimely jests! a servant's jest is more sauciness than his counsel.

Free. But what, will you see nobody? not your friends?

Man. Friends!—I have but one, and he, I hear, is not in town; nay, can have but one friend, for a true heart admits but of one friendship, as of one love. But in having that friend, I have a thousand; for he has the courage of men in despair, yet the diffidency and caution of cowards; thesecrecy of the revengeful, and the constancy of martyrs; one fit to advise, to keep a secret, to fight and die for his friend. Such I think him; for I have trusted him with my mistress in my absence: and the trust of beauty is sure the greatest we can show.

Free. Well, but all your good thoughts are not for him alone, I hope? Pray what d'ye think of me for a friend?

Man. Of thee! Why, thou art a latitudinarian in friendship, that is, no friend; thou dost side with all mankind, but wilt suffer for none. Thou art indeed like your lord Plausible, the pink of courtesy, therefore hast no friendship: for ceremony and great professing renders friendship as much suspected as it does religion.

Free. And no professing, no ceremony at all in friendship, were as unnatural and as undecent as in religion: and there is hardly such a thing as an honest hypocrite, who professes himself to be worse than he is, unless it be yourself; for though I could never get you to say you were my friend, I know you'll prove so.

Man. I must confess, I am so much your friend, I would not deceive you; therefore must tell you, not only because my heart is taken up, but according to your rules of friendship, I cannot be your friend.

Free. Why, pray?

Man. Because he that is, you'll say, a true friend to a man, is a friend to all his friends. But you must pardon me, I cannot wish well to pimps, flatterers, detractors, and cowards, stiff-nodding knaves, and supple, pliant, kissing fools. Now, all these I have seen you use like the dearest friends in the world.

Free. Ha! ha! ha!—What, you observed me, I warrant, in the galleries at Whitehall, doing the business of the place? Pshaw! Court-professions, like court promises, go for nothing, man. But, faith, could you think I was a friend to all those I hugged, kissed, flattered, bowed to? Ha! ha!—

Man. You told 'em so, and swore it too; I heard you.

Free. Ay, but when their backs were turned, did not I tell you they were rogues, villains, rascals, whom I despised and hated?

Man. Very fine! But what reason had I to believe you spoke your heart to me, since you professed deceiving so many?

Free. Why, don't you know, good captain, that telling truth is a quality as prejudicial to a man that would thrive in the world, as square play to a cheat, or true love to a whore? Would you have a man speak truth to his ruin? You are severer than the law, which requires no man to swear against himself. You would have me speak truth against myself I warrant, and tell my promising friend the courtier, he has a bad memory.

Man. Yes.

Free. And so make him remember to forget my business? And I should tell the great lawyer too, that he takes oftener fees to hold his tongue, than to speak?

Man. No doubt on't.

Free. Ay, and have him hang or ruin me, when he should come to be a judge, and I before him? And you would have me tell the new officer, who bought his employment lately, that he is a coward?

Man. Ay.

Free. And so get myself cashiered, not him, he having the better friends, though I the better sword? And I should tell the scribbler of honour, that heraldry were a prettier and fitter study for so fine a gentleman than poetry?

Man. Certainly.

Free. And so find myself mauled in his next hired lampoon? And you would have me tell the holy lady, too, she lies with her chaplain?

Man. No doubt on't.

Free. And so draw the clergy upon my back, and want a good table to dine at sometimes? And by the same reason too, I should tell you that the world thinks you a mad man, a brutal, and have you cut my throat, or worse, hate me. What other good success of all my plain-dealing could I have, than what I've mentioned?

Man. Why, first, your promising courtier would keep his word out of fear of more reproaches, or at least would give you no more vain hopes: your lawyer would serve you more faithfully; for he, having no honour but his interest, is truest still to him he

knows suspects him: the new officer would provoke thee to make him a coward, and so be cashiered, that thou, or some other honest fellow, who had more courage than money, might get his place: the noble sonnetteer would trouble thee no more with his madrigals: the praying lady would leave off railing at wenching before thee, and not turn away her chambermaid for her own known frailty with thee: and I, instead of hating thee, should love thee for thy plain dealing; and in lieu of being mortified, am proud that the world and I think not well of one another.

Free. Well, doctors differ. You are for plain dealing, I find: but against your particular notions, I have the practice of the whole world. Observe but any morning what people do when they get together on the Exchange, in Westminster-hall, or the galleries in Whitehall.

Man. I must confess, there they seem to rehearse Bayes's grand dance. Here you see a bishop bowing low to a gaudy atheist; a judge to a doorkeeper; a great lord to a fishmonger, or scrivener with a jack-chain about his neck; a lawyer to a sergeant-at-arms; a velvet physician to a threadbare chemist; and a supple gentleman-usher to a surly beefeater: and so tread round in a preposterous huddle of ceremony to each other, whilst they can hardly hold their solemn false countenances.

Free. Well, they understand the world.

Man. Which I do not, I confess.

Free. But, sir, pray believe the friendship I promise you real, whatsoever I have professed to others: try me, at least.

Man. Why, what would you do for me?

Free. I would fight for you.

Man. That you would do for your own honour. —But what else?

Free. I would lend you money, if I had it.

Man. To borrow more of me another time. That were putting your money to interest; a usurer would be as good a friend.—But what other piece of friendship?

Free. I would speak well of you to your enemies.

Man. To encourage others to be your friends, by a show of gratitude.—But what else?

Free. Nay, I would not hear you ill spoken of behind your back by my friend.

Man. Nay, then, thou'rt a friend, indeed.—But it were unreasonable to expect it from thee, as the world goes now, when new friends, like new mistresses, are got by disparaging old ones.

Enter FIDELIA.

But here comes another, will say as much at least. —Dost thou not love me devilishly too, my little volunteer, as well as he or any man can?

Fid. Better than any man can love you, my dear captain.

Man. Look you there, I told you so.

Fid. As well as you do truth or honour, sir, as well.

Man. Nay, good young gentleman, enough, for shame! Thou hast been a page, by thy flattering and lying, to one of those praying ladies who love flattery so well they are jealous of it; and wert turned away for saying the same things to the old housekeeper for sweetmeats, as you did to your lady; for thou flatterest everything and everybody alike.

Fid. You, dear sir, should not suspect the truth of what I say of you, though to you. Fame, the old liar, is believed when she speaks wonders of you: you cannot be flattered, sir, your merit is unspeakable.

Man. Hold, hold, sir, or I shall suspect worse of you, that you have been a cushion-bearer to some state-hypocrite, and turned away by the chaplains, for out-flattering their probation-sermons for a benefice.

Fid. Suspect me for anything, sir, but the want of love, faith, and duty to you, the bravest, worthiest of mankind; believe me, I could die for you, sir.

Man. Nay, there you lie, sir; did not I see thee more afraid in the fight than the chaplain of the ship, or the purser that bought his place?

Fid. Can he be said to be afraid, that ventures to sea with you?

Man. Fy! fy! no more; I shall hate thy flattery worse than thy cowardice, nay, than thy bragging.

Fid. Well, I own then I was afraid, mightily afraid: yet for you I would be afraid again, a hundred times afraid. Dying is ceasing to be afraid, and that I could do sure for you, and you'll believe me one day. [*Weeps.*

Free. Poor youth! believe his eyes, if not his tongue: he seems to speak truth with them.

Man. What, does he cry? A pox on't! a maudlin flatterer is as nauseously troublesome as a maudlin drunkard.—No more, you little milksop, do not cry, I'll never make thee afraid again; for of all men, if I had occasion, thou shouldst not be my second; and when I go to sea again, thou shalt venture thy life no more with me.

Fid. Why, will you leave me behind then?— [*Aside.*] If you would preserve my life, I'm sure you should not.

Man. Leave thee behind! ay, ay, thou art a hopeful youth for the shore only. Here thou wilt live to be cherished by fortune and the great ones: for thou mayst easily come to out-flatter a dull poet, outlie a coffee-house or gazette-writer, outswear a knight of the post, outwatch a pimp, outfawn a rook, outpromise a lover, outrail a wit, and outbrag a sea-captain:—all this thou canst do, because thou'rt a coward, a thing I hate; therefore thou'lt do better with the world than with me, and these are the good courses you must take in the world. There's good advice, at least, at parting: go, and be happy with't.

Fid. Parting, sir! O let me not hear that dismal word.

Man. If my words frighten thee, begone the sooner; for to be plain with thee, cowardice and I cannot dwell together.

Fid. And cruelty and courage never dwelt together sure, sir. Do not turn me off to shame and misery, for I am helpless and friendless.

Man. Friendless! there are half a score friends for thee then.—[*Offers her gold.*] I leave myself no more: they'll help thee a little. Begone, go, I must be cruel to thee (if thou callest it so) out of pity.

Fid. If you would be cruelly pitiful, sir, let it be with your sword, not gold. [*Exit*

Re-enter first Sailor.

1 *Sail.* We have, with much ado, turned away two gentlemen, who told us, forty times over, their names were Mr. Novel and Major Oldfox.

Man. Well, to your post again.—[*Exit* Sailor.] But how come those puppies coupled always together?

Free. O, the coxcombs keep each other company, to show each other, as Novel calls it; or, as Oldfox says, like two knives, to whet one another.

Man. And set other people's teeth on edge.

Re-enter second Sailor.

2 *Sail.* Here is a woman, an't like your honour, scolds and bustles with us, to come in, as much as a seaman's widow at the Navy office: her name is Mrs. Blackacre.

Man. That fiend too!

Free. The widow Blackacre, is it not? that litigious she petty-fogger, who is at law and difference with all the world; but I wish I could make her agree with me in the church. They say she has fifteen hundred pounds a year jointure, and the care of her son, that is, the destruction of his estate.

Man. Her lawyers, attorneys, and solicitors, have fifteen hundred pounds a year, whilst she is contented to be poor, to make other people so. For she is as vexatious as her father was, the great attorney, nay, as a dozen Norfolk attorneys, and as implacable an adversary as a wife suing for alimony, or a parson for his tithes; and she loves an Easter term, or any term, not as other country ladies do, to come up to be fine, cuckold their husbands, and take their pleasure; for she has no pleasure but in vexing others, and is usually clothed and daggled like a bawd in disguise, pursued through alleys by sergeants. When she is in town, she lodges in one of the inns of Chancery, where she breeds her son, and is herself his tutoress in law French; and for her country abode, though she has no estate there, she chooses Norfolk.—But, bid her come in, with a pox to her! she is Olivia's kinswoman, and may make me amends for her visit, by some discourse of that dear woman.

[*Exit* Sailor.

Enter Widow BLACKACRE *with a mantle, and a green bag, and several papers in the other hand:* JERRY BLACKACRE, *in a gown, laden with green bags, following her.*

Wid. I never had so much to do with a judge's doorkeeper, as with yours; but—

Man. But the incomparable Olivia, how does she since I went?

Wid. Since you went, my suit—

Man. Olivia, I say, is she well?

Wid. My suit, if you had not returned—

Man. Damn your suit! how does your cousin Olivia?

Wid. My suit, I say, had been quite lost; but now—

Man. But now, where is Olivia? in town? for—

Wid. For to-morrow we are to have a hearing.

Man. Would you would let me have a hearing to-day!

Wid. But why won't you hear me?

Man. I am no judge, and you talk of nothing but suits; but, pray tell me, when did you see Olivia?

Wid. I am no visiter, but a woman of business; or if I ever visit, 'tis only the Chancery-lane ladies, ladies towards the law; and not any of your lazy, good-for-nothing flirts, who cannot read law-French, though a gallant writ it. But, as I was telling you, my suit—

Man. Damn these impertinent vexatious people of business, of all sexes! they are still troubling the world with the tedious recitals of their lawsuits: and one can no more stop their mouths than a wit's when he talks of himself, or an intelligencer's when he talks of other people.

Wid. And a pox of all vexatious, impertinent lovers! they are still perplexing the world with the tedious narrations of their love-suits, and discourses of their mistresses! You are as troublesome to a poor widow of business, as a young coxcombly rhyming lover.

Man. And thou art as troublesome to me, as a rook to a losing gamester, or a young putter of cases to his mistress or sempstress, who has love in her head for another.

Wid. Nay, since you talk of putting of cases, and will not hear me speak, hear our Jerry a little; let him put our case to you, for the trial's to-morrow: and since you are my chief witness, I would have your memory refreshed and your judgment informed, that you may not give your evidence improperly.—Speak out, child.

Jer. Yes, forsooth. Hem! hem! John-a-Stiles—

Man. You may talk, young lawyer, but I shall no more mind you, than a hungry judge does a cause after the clock has struck one.

Free. Nay, you'll find him as peevish too.

Wid. No matter. Jerry, go on.—Do you observe it then, sir; for I think I have seen you in a gown once. Lord, I could hear our Jerry put cases all day long.—Mark him, sir.

Jer. John-a-Stiles—no—there are first, Fitz, Pere, and Ayle,—no, no, Ayle, Pere, and Fitz; Ayle is seised in fee of Blackacre; John-a-Stiles disseises Ayle; Ayle makes claim, and the disseisor dies; then the Ayle—no, the Fitz—

Wid. No, the Pere, sirrah.

Jer. Oh, the Pere! ay, the Pere, sir, and the Fitz—no, the Ayle,—no, the Pere and the Fitz, sir, and—

Man. Damn Pere, Mere, and Fitz, sir!

Wid. No, you are out, child.—Hear me, captain, then. There are Ayle, Pere, and Fitz; Ayle is seised in fee of Blackacre; and, being so seised, John-a-Stiles disseises the Ayle, Ayle makes claim, and the disseisor dies; and then the Pere re-enters, the Pere, sirrah, the Pere—[*to* JERRY.] and the Fitz enters upon the Pere, and the Ayle brings his writ of disseisin in the post; and the Pere brings his writ of disseisin in the Pere, and—

Man. Canst thou hear this stuff, Freeman? I could as soon suffer a whole noise of flatterers at a great man's levee in a morning; but thou hast servile complacency enough to listen to a quibbling statesman in disgrace, nay, and be beforehand with him, in laughing at his dull no-jest; but I—

[*Offering to go out.*

Wid. Nay, sir, hold! Where's the subpœna, Jerry? I must serve you, sir. You are required by this, to give your testimony—

Man. I'll be forsworn to be revenged on thee.

[*Exit, throwing away the subpœna.*

Wid. Get you gone, for a lawless companion!—Come, Jerry, I had almost forgot, we were to meet at the master's at three: let us mind our business still, child.

Jer. Ay, forsooth, e'en so let's.

Free. Nay, madam, now I would beg you to hear me a little, a little of my business.

Wid. I have business of my own calls me away, sir.

Free. My business would prove yours too, dear madam.

Wid. Yours would be some sweet business, I warrant. What, 'tis no Westminster-hall business? would you have my advice?

Free. No, faith, 'tis a little Westminster Abbey business: I would have your consent.

Wid. O fy, fy, sir! to me such discourse, before my dear minor there!

Jer. Ay, ay, mother, he would be taking livery and seisin of your jointure, by digging the turf; but I'll watch your waters, bully, i'fac.—Come away, mother.

[*Exit, haling away his mother.*

Re-enter FIDELIA.

Fid. Dear sir, you have pity; beget but some in our captain for me.

Free. Where is he?

Fid. Within; swearing as much as he did in the great storm, and cursing you, and sometimes sinks into calms and sighs, and talks of his Olivia.

Free. He would never trust me to see her.—Is she handsome?

Fid. No, if you'll take my word: but I am not a proper judge.

Free. What is she?

Fid. A gentlewoman, I suppose, but of as mean a fortune as beauty; but her relations would not suffer her to go with him to the Indies: and his aversion to this side of the world, together with the late opportunity of commanding the convoy, would not let him stay here longer, though to enjoy her.

Free. He loves her mightily then?

Fid. Yes, so well, that the remainder of his fortune (I hear about five or six thousand pounds) he has left her, in case he had died by the way, or before she could prevail with her friends to follow him; which he expected she should do, and has left behind him his great bosom friend to be her convoy to him.

Free. What charms has she for him, if she be not handsome?

Fid. He fancies her, I suppose, the only woman of truth and sincerity in the world.

Free. No common beauty, I confess.

Fid. Or else sure he would not have trusted her with so great a share of his fortune, in his absence, I suppose (since his late loss) all he has.

Free. Why, has he left it in her own custody?

Fid. I am told so.

Free. Then he has showed love to her indeed, in leaving her, like an old husband that dies as soon as he has made his wife a good jointure.—But I'll go in to him, and speak for you, and know more from him of his Olivia. [*Exit.*

Fid. His Olivia, indeed, his happy Olivia!
Yet she was left behind, when I was with him:
But she was ne'er out of his mind or heart.
She has told him she loved him; I have show'd it,
And durst not tell him so, till I had done,
Under this habit, such convincing acts
Of loving friendship for him, that through it
He first might find out both my sex and love;
And, when I'd had him from his fair Olivia,
And this bright world of artful beauties here,
Might then have hoped, he would have look'd on me,
Amongst the sooty Indians; and I could,
To choose, there live his wife, where wives are forced
To live no longer, when their husbands die;
Nay, what's yet worse, to share 'em whilst they live
With many rival wives. But here he comes,
And I must yet keep out of his sight, not
To lose it for ever. [*Exit.*

Re-enter MANLY *and* FREEMAN.

Free. But pray what strange charms has she that could make you love?

Man. Strange charms indeed! she has beauty enough to call in question her wit or virtue, and her form would make a starved hermit a ravisher; yet her virtue and conduct would preserve her from the subtle lust of a pampered prelate. She is so perfect a beauty, that art could not better it, nor affectation deform it. Yet all this is nothing. Her tongue as well as face ne'er knew artifice; nor ever did her words or looks contradict her heart. She is all truth, and hates the lying, masking, daubing world, as I do: for which I love her, and for which I think she dislikes not me. For she has often shut out of her conversation for mine, the gaudy fluttering parrots of the town, apes and echoes of men only, and refused their common-place pert chat, flattery and submissions, to be entertained with my sullen bluntness, and honest love: and, last of all, swore to me, since her parents would not suffer her to go with me, she would stay behind for no other man; but follow me without their leave, if not to be obtained. Which oath—

Free. Did you think she would keep?

Man. Yes; for she is not (I tell you) like other women, but can keep her promise, though she has sworn to keep it. But, that she might the better keep it, I left her the value of five or six thousand pounds: for women's wants are generally the most importunate solicitors to love or marriage.

Free. And money summons lovers more than beauty, and augments but their importunity, and their number; so makes it the harder for a woman to deny 'em. For my part, I am for the French maxim:—*If you would have your female subjects loyal, keep 'em poor.*—But, in short, that your mistress may not marry, you have given her a portion.

Man. She had given me her heart first, and I am satisfied with the security; I can never doubt her truth and constancy.

Free. It seems you do, since you are fain to bribe it with money. But how come you to be so diffident of the man that says he loves you, and not doubt the woman that says it?

Man. I should, I confess, doubt the love of any other woman but her, as I do the friendship of any other man but him I have trusted; but I have such proofs of their faith as cannot deceive me.

Free. Cannot!

Man. Not but I know that generally no man can be a great enemy but under the name of friend; and if you are a cuckold, it is your friend only that makes you so, for your enemy is not admitted to your house: if you are cheated in your fortune, 'tis your friend that does it, for your enemy is not made your trustee: if your honour or good

name be injured, 'tis your friend that does it still, because your enemy is not believed against you. Therefore, I rather choose to go where honest, downright barbarity is professed, where men devour one another like generous hungry lions and tigers, not like crocodiles; where they think the devil white, of our complexion; and I am already so far an Indian. But if your weak faith doubts this miracle of a woman, come along with me, and believe; and thou wilt find her so handsome, that thou, who art so much my friend, wilt have a mind to lie with her, and so wilt not fail to discover what her faith and thine is to me.

When we're in love, the great adversity,
Our friends and mistresses at once we try.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—OLIVIA's *Lodging.*

Enter OLIVIA, ELIZA, *and* LETTICE.

Oliv. Ah, cousin, what a world 'tis we live in! I am so weary of it.

Eliza. Truly, cousin, I can find no fault with it, but that we cannot always live in't, for I can never be weary of it.

Oliv. O hideous! you cannot be in earnest sure, when you say you like the filthy world.

Eliza. You cannot be in earnest sure, when you say you dislike it.

Oliv. You are a very censorious creature, I find.

Eliza. I must confess, I think we women as often discover where we love by railing, as men when they lie by their swearing; and the world is but a constant keeping gallant, whom we fail not to quarrel with when anything crosses us, yet cannot part with't for our hearts.

Let. A gallant indeed, madam, whom ladies first make jealous, and then quarrel with it for being so; for if, by her indiscretion, a lady be talked of for a man, she cries presently, *'Tis a censorious world!* if by her vanity the intrigue be found out, *'Tis a prying malicious world!* if by her over-fondness the gallant proves unconstant, *'Tis a false world!* and if by her niggardliness the chambermaid tells, *'Tis a perfidious world!* But that, I'm sure, your ladyship cannot say of the world yet, as bad as 'tis.

Oliv. But I may say, *'Tis a very impertinent world!*—Hold your peace.—And, cousin, if the world be a gallant, 'tis such a one as is my aversion. Pray name it no more.

Eliza. But is it possible the world, which has such variety of charms for other women, can have none for you? Let's see—first, what dy'e think of dressing and fine clothes?

Oliv. Dressing! Fy, fy, 'tis my aversion.—[*To* LETTICE.] But come hither, you dowdy; methinks you might have opened this toure better; O hideous! I cannot suffer it! D'ye see how't sits?

Eliza. Well enough, cousin, if dressing be your aversion.

Oliv. 'Tis so: and for variety of rich clothes, they are more my aversion.

Let. Ay, 'tis because your ladyship wears 'em too long; for indeed a gown, like a gallant, grows one's aversion by having too much of it.

Oliv. Insatiable creature! I'll be sworn I have had this not above three days, cousin, and within this month have made some six more.

Eliza. Then your aversion to 'em is not altogether so great.

Oliv. Alas! 'tis for my woman only I wear 'em, cousin.

Let. If it be for me only, madam, pray do not wear 'em.

Eliza. But what d'ye think of visits—balls?

Oliv. O, I detest 'em!

Eliza. Of plays?

Oliv. I abominate 'em; filthy, obscene, hideous things.

Eliza. What say you to masquerading in the winter, and Hyde-park in the summer?

Oliv. Insipid pleasures I taste not.

Eliza. Nay, if you are for more solid pleasures, what think you of a rich young husband?

Oliv. O horrid! marriage! what a pleasure you have found out! I nauseate it of all things.

Let. But what does your ladyship think then of a liberal handsome young lover?

Oliv. A handsome young fellow, you impudent! begone out of my sight. Name a handsome young fellow to me! foh, a hideous handsome young fellow I abominate! [*Spits.*

Eliza. Indeed! But let's see—will nothing please you? what d'ye think of the court?

Oliv. How, the court! the court, cousin! my aversion, my aversion, my aversion of all aversions!

Eliza. How, the court! where—

Oliv. Where sincerity is a quality as much out of fashion and as unprosperous as bashfulness: I could not laugh at a quibble, though it were a fat privy-counsellor's; nor praise a lord's ill verses, though I were myself the subject; nor an old lady's young looks, though I were her woman; nor sit to a vain young smile-maker, though he flattered me. In short, I could not glout upon a man when he comes into a room, and laugh at him when he goes out: I cannot rail at the absent to flatter the standers-by; I—

Eliza. Well, but railing now is so common, that 'tis no more malice, but the fashion; and the absent think they are no more the worse for being railed at, than the present think they're the better for being flattered. And for the court—

Oliv. Nay, do not defend the court; for you'll make me rail at it like a trusting citizen's widow.

Eliza. Or like a Holborn lady, who could not get in to the last ball, or was out of countenance in the drawing-room the last Sunday of her appearance there. For none rail at the court but those who cannot get into it, or else who are ridiculous when they are there; and I shall suspect you were laughed at when you were last there, or would be a maid of honour.

Oliv. I a maid of honour! To be a maid of honour, were yet of all things my aversion.

Eliza. In what sense am I to understand you?

But in fine, by the word aversion, I'm sure you dissemble; for I never knew woman yet used it who did not. Come, our tongues belie our hearts more than our pocket-glasses do our faces. But methinks we ought to leave off dissembling, since 'tis grown of no use to us; for all wise observers understand us now-a-days, as they do dreams, almanacs, and Dutch gazettes, by the contrary: and a man no more believes a woman, when she says she has an aversion for him, than when she says she'll cry out.

Oliv. O filthy! hideous! Peace, cousin, or your discourse will be my aversion: and you may believe me.

Eliza. Yes; for if anything be a woman's aversion, 'tis plain dealing from another woman: and perhaps that's your quarrel to the world; for that will talk, as your woman says.

Oliv. Talk? not of me sure; for what men do I converse with? what visits do I admit?

Enter Boy.

Boy. Here's the gentleman to wait upon you, madam.

Oliv. On me! you little unthinking fop; d'ye know what you say?

Boy. Yes, madam, 'tis the gentleman that comes every day to you, who—

Oliv. Hold your peace, you heedless little animal, and get you gone.—[*Exit* Boy.] This country boy, cousin, takes my dancing-master, tailor, or the spruce milliner, for visitors.

Let. No, madam; 'tis Mr. Novel, I'm sure, by his talking so loud: I know his voice too, madam.

Oliv. You know nothing, you buffle-headed stupid creature you: you would make my cousin believe I receive visits. But if it be Mr.—what did you call him?

Let. Mr. Novel, madam; he that—

Oliv. Hold your peace; I'll hear no more of him. But if it be your Mr.—(I cannot think of his name again) I suppose he has followed my cousin hither.

Eliza. No, cousin, I will not rob you of the honour of the visit: 'tis to you, cousin; for I know him not.

Oliv. Nor did I ever hear of him before, upon my honour, cousin, besides, han't I told you, that visits, and the business of visits, flattery and detraction, are my aversion? D'ye think then I would admit such a coxcomb as he is? who rather than not rail, will rail at the dead, whom none speak ill of; rather than not flatter, will flatter the poets of the age, whom none will flatter; who affects novelty as much as the fashion, and is as fantastical as changeable, and as well known as the fashion; who likes nothing but what is new, nay, would choose to have his friend or his title a new one. In fine, he is my aversion.

Eliza. I find you do know him, cousin; at least, have heard of him.

Oliv. Yes, now I remember, I have heard of him.

Eliza. Well; but since he is such a coxcomb, for heaven's sake, let him not come up. Tell him, Mrs. Lettice, your lady is not within.

Oliv. No, Lettice, tell him my cousin is here, and that he may come up. For notwithstanding I detest the sight of him, you may like his conversation; and though I would use him scurvily, I will not be rude to you in my own lodging: since he has followed you hither, let him come up, I say.

Eliza. Very fine! pray let him go to the devil, I say, for me: I know him not, nor desire it. Send him away, Mrs. Lettice.

Oliv. Upon my word, she shan't: I must disobey your commands, to comply with your desires. Call him up, Lettice.

Eliza. Nay, I'll swear she shall not stir on that errand. [*Holds* LETTICE.

Oliv. Well then, I'll call him myself for you, since you will have it so.—[*Calls out at the door.*] Mr. Novel, sir, sir!

Enter NOVEL.

Nov. Madam, I beg your pardon; perhaps you were busy: I did not think you had company with you.

Eliza. Yet he comes to me, cousin! [*Aside to* OLIVIA.

Oliv. Chairs there. [*They sit.*

Nov. Well; but, madam, d'ye know whence I come now?

Oliv. From some melancholy place, I warrant, sir, since they have lost your good company.

Eliza. So!

Nov. From a place where they have treated me at dinner with so much civility and kindness, a pox on them! that I could hardly get away to you, dear madam.

Oliv. You have a way with you so new and obliging, sir!

Eliza. You hate flattery, cousin! [*Apart to* OLIVIA.

Nov. Nay, faith, madam, d'ye think my way new? Then you are obliging, madam. I must confess, I hate imitation, to do anything like other people. All that know me do me the honour to say, I am an original, faith. But, as I was saying, madam, I have been treated to-day with all the ceremony and kindness imaginable at my lady Autumn's. But, the nauseous old woman at the upper end of her table—

Oliv. Revives the old Grecian custom, of serving in a death's head with their banquets.

Nov. Ha! ha! fine, just, i'faith, nay, and new. 'Tis like eating with the ghost in the *Libertine*: she would frighten a man from her dinner with her hollow invitation, and spoil one's stomach—

Oliv. To meat or women. I detest her hollow cherry cheeks: she looks like an old coach new painted; affecting an unseemly smugness, whilst she is ready to drop in pieces.

Eliza. You hate detraction, I see, cousin. [*Apart to* OLIVIA.

Nov. But the silly old fury, whilst she affects to look like a woman of this age, talks—

Oliv. Like one of the last; and as passionately as an old courtier who has outlived his office.

Nov. Yes, madam; but pray let me give you her character. Then she never counts her age by the years, but—

Oliv. By the masques she has lived to see.

Nov. Nay then, madam, I see you think a little harmless railing too great a pleasure for any but yourself; and therefore I've done.

Oliv. Nay, faith, you shall tell me who you had there at dinner.

Nov. If you would hear me, madam.

Oliv. Most patiently; speak, sir.

Nov. Then, we had her daughter—

Oliv. Ay, her daughter; the very disgrace to good clothes, which she always wears but to heighten her deformity, not mend it: for she is still most splendidly, gallantly ugly, and looks like an ill piece of daubing in a rich frame.

Nov. So! But have you done with her, madam? and can you spare her to me a little now?

Oliv. Ay, ay, sir.

Nov. Then, she is like—

Oliv. She is, you'd say, like a city bride; the greater fortune, but not the greater beauty, for her dress.

Nov. Well: yet have you done, madam? Then she—

Oliv. Then she bestows as unfortunately on her face all the graces in fashion, as the languishing eye, the hanging or pouting lip. But as the fool is never more provoking than when he aims at wit, the ill-favoured of our sex are never more nauseous than when they would be beauties, adding to their natural deformity the artificial ugliness of affectation.

Eliza. So, cousin, I find one may have a collection of all one's acquaintance's pictures as well at your house as at Mr. Lely's. Only the difference is, there we find 'em much handsomer than they are, and like; here much uglier, and like: and you are the first of the profession of picture-drawing I ever knew without flattery.

Oliv. I draw after the life; do nobody wrong, cousin.

Eliza. No, you hate flattery and detraction.

Oliv. But, Mr. Novel, who had you besides at dinner?

Nov. Nay, the devil take me if I tell you, unless you will allow me the privilege of railing in my turn.—But, now I think on't, the women ought to be your province, as the men are mine: and you must know we had him whom—

Oliv. Him, whom—

Nov. What, invading me already? and giving the character before you know the man?

Eliza. No, that is not fair, though it be usual.

Oliv. I beg your pardon, Mr. Novel; pray go on.

Nov. Then, I say, we had that familiar coxcomb who is at home wheresoe'er he comes.

Oliv. Ay, that fool—

Nov. Nay then, madam, your servant; I'm gone. Taking the fool out of one's mouth is worse than taking the bread out of one's mouth.

Oliv. I've done; your pardon, Mr. Novel: pray proceed.

Nov. I say, the rogue, that he may be the only wit in company, will let nobody else talk, and—

Oliv. Ay, those fops who love to talk all themselves are of all things my aversion.

Nov. Then you'll let me speak, madam, sure. The rogue, I say, will force his jest upon you; and I hate a jest that's forced upon a man, as much as a glass.

Eliza. Why, I hope, sir, he does not expect a man of your temperance in jesting should do him reason?

Nov. What! interruption from this side too? I must then— [*Offers to rise.* OLIVIA *holds him.*

Oliv. No, sir.—You must know, cousin, that fop he means, though he talks only to be commended, will not give you leave to do't.

Nov. But, madam—

Oliv. He a wit! Hang him; he's only an adopter of straggling jests and fatherless lampoons: by the credit of which he eats at good tables, and so, like the barren beggar-woman, lives by borrowed children.

Nov. Madam—

Oliv. And never was author of anything but his news: but that is still all his own.

Nov. Madam, pray—

Oliv. An eternal babbler; and makes no more use of his ears, than a man that sits at a play by his mistress, or in Fop-corner. He's, in fine, a base detracting fellow, and is my aversion.—But who else, prithee Mr. Novel, was there with you? Nay, you shan't stir.

Nov. I beg your pardon, madam; I cannot stay in any place where I'm not allowed a little christian liberty of railing.

Oliv. Nay, prithee Mr. Novel, stay: and though you should rail at me, I would hear you with patience. Prithee, who else was there with you?

Nov. Your servant, madam.

Oliv. Nay, prithee tell us, Mr. Novel, prithee do.

Nov. We had nobody else.

Oliv. Nay, faith, I know you had. Come, my lord Plausible was there too; who is, cousin, a—

Eliza. You need not tell me what he is, cousin; for I know him to be a civil, good-natured, harmless gentleman, that speaks well of all the world, and is always in good humour; and—

Oliv. Hold, cousin, hold; I hate detraction. But I must tell you, cousin, his civility is cowardice, his good-nature want of wit; and he has neither courage nor sense to rail: and for his being always in humour, 'tis because he is never dissatisfied with himself. In fine, he is my aversion; and I never admit his visits beyond my hall.

Nov. No, he visit you! Damn him, cringing grinning rogue! if I should see him coming up to you, I would make bold to kick him down again.—Ha!

Enter my Lord PLAUSIBLE.

My dear lord, your most humble servant.

[*Rises and salutes* PLAUSIBLE, *and kisses him.*

Eliza. So, I find kissing and railing succeed each other with the angry men as well as with the angry women; and their quarrels are like love-quarrels, since absence is the only cause of them; for as soon as the man appears again, they are over. [*Aside.*

Plaus. Your most faithful humble servant, generous Mr. Novel. And, madam, I am your eternal slave, and kiss your fair hands; which I had done sooner, according to your commands, but—

Oliv. No excuses, my lord.

Eliza. What, you sent for him then, cousin?

[*Apart to* OLIVIA.

Nov. Ha! invited! [*Aside.*

Oliv. I know you must divide yourself; for your good company is too general a good to be engrossed by any particular friend.

Plaus. O lord, madam, my company! your most obliged, faithful, humble servant. But I could have brought you good company indeed; for I parted at your door with two of the worthiest, bravest men—

Oliv. Who were they, my lord?

Nov. Who do you call the worthiest bravest men, pray?

Plaus. O, the wisest bravest gentlemen! men of such honour and virtue! of such good qualities! ah—

Eliza. This is a coxcomb that speaks ill of all people a different way, and libels everybody with dull praise, and commonly in the wrong place; so makes his panegyrics abusive lampoons. [*Aside.*

Oliv. But pray let me know who they were?

Plaus. Ah! such patterns of heroic virtue! such—

Nov. Well; but who the devil were they?

Plaus. The honour of our nation! the glory of our age! Ah, I could dwell a twelvemonth on their praise; which indeed I might spare by telling their names; sir John Current and sir Richard Court-Title.

Nov. Court-Title! ha! ha!

Oliv. And sir John Current! Why will you keep such a wretch company, my lord?

Plaus. O madam, seriously you are a little too severe; for he is a man of unquestioned reputation in everything.

Oliv. Yes, because he endeavours only with the women to pass for a man of courage, and with the bullies for a wit; with the wits for a man of business, and with the men of business for a favourite at court; and at court for city-security.

Nov. And for sir Richard, he—

Plaus. He loves your choice picked company, persons that—

Oliv. He loves a lord indeed; but—

Nov. Pray, dear madam, let me have but a bold stroke or two at his picture. He loves a lord, as you say, though—

Oliv. Though he borrowed his money, and ne'er paid him again.

Nov. And would bespeak a place three days before at the back-end of a lord's coach to Hyde-park.

Plaus. Nay, i'faith, i'faith, you are both too severe.

Oliv. Then to show yet more his passion for quality, he makes love to that fulsome coach-load of honour, my lady Goodly, for he's always at her lodging.

Plaus. Because it is the conventicle-gallant, the meeting-house of all the fair ladies, and glorious superfine beauties of the town.

Nov. Very fine ladies! there's first—

Oliv. Her honour, as fat as an hostess.

Plaus. She is something plump indeed, a goodly, comely, graceful person.

Nov. Then there's my lady Frances—what d'ye call her? as ugly—

Oliv. As a citizen's lawfully begotten daughter.

Plaus. She has wit in abundance, and the handsomest heel, elbow, and tip of an ear, you ever saw.

Nov. Heel and elbow! ha! ha! And there's my lady Betty, you know—

Oliv. As sluttish and slatternly as an Irish woman bred in France.

Plaus. Ah! all she has hangs with a loose air, indeed, and becoming negligence.

Eliza. You see all faults with lovers' eyes, I find, my lord.

Plaus. Ah, madam, your most obliged, faithful, humble servant to command! But you can say nothing sure against the superfine mistress—

Oliv. I know who you mean. She is as censorious and detracting a jade as a superannuated sinner.

Plaus. She has a smart way of raillery, 'tis confessed.

Nov. And then for Mrs. Grideline—

Plaus. She, I'm sure, is—

Oliv. One that never spoke ill of anybody, 'tis confessed. For she is as silent in conversation as a country lover, and no better company than a clock, or a weather-glass; for if she sounds, 'tis but once an hour to put you in mind of the time of day, or to tell you 'twill be cold or hot, rain or snow.

Plaus. Ah, poor creature! she's extremely good and modest.

Nov. And for Mrs. Bridlechin, she's—

Oliv. As proud as a churchman's wife.

Plaus. She's a woman of great spirit and honour, and will not make herself cheap, 'tis true.

Nov. Then Mrs. Hoyden, that calls all people by their surnames, and is—

Oliv. As familiar a duck—

Nov. As an actress in the tiring-room. There I was once beforehand with you, madam.

Plaus. Mrs. Hoyden! a poor, affable, good-natured soul. But the divine Mrs. Trifle comes thither too. Sure her beauty, virtue, and conduct, you can say nothing to.

Oliv. No!

Nov. No!—Pray let me speak, madam.

Oliv. First, can any one be called beautiful that squints?

Plaus. Her eyes languish a little, I own.

Nov. Languish! ha! ha!

Oliv. Languish!—Then, for her conduct, she was seen at the *Country Wife* after the first day. There's for you, my lord.

Plaus. But, madam, she was not seen to use her fan all the play long, turn aside her head, or by a conscious blush discover more guilt than modesty.

Oliv. Very fine! Then you think a woman modest that sees the hideous *Country Wife* without blushing, or publishing her detestation of it? D'ye hear him, cousin?

Eliza. Yes, and am, I must confess, something of his opinion; and think, that as an over-conscious fool at a play, by endeavouring to show the author's want of wit, exposes his own to more censure, so may a lady call her own modesty in question, by publicly cavilling with the poet's. For all those grimaces of honour and artificial modesty disparage a woman's real virtue, as much as the use of white and red does the natural complexion: and you must use very, very little, if you would have it thought your own.

Oliv. Then you would have a woman of honour with passive looks, ears, and tongue, undergo all the hideous obscenity she hears at nasty plays.

Eliza. Truly, I think a woman betrays her want of modesty, by showing it publicly in a playhouse, as much as a man does his want of courage by a quarrel there; for the truly modest and stout say least, and are least exceptious, especially in public.

Oliv. O hideous, cousin! this cannot be your opinion. But you are one of those who have the confidence to pardon the filthy play.

Eliza. Why, what is there of ill in't, say you?

Oliv. O fy! fy! fy! would you put me to the blush anew? call all the blood into my face again? But to satisfy you then; first, the clandestine obscenity in the very name of *Horner*.

Eliza. Truly, 'tis so hidden, I cannot find it out, I confess.

Oliv. O horrid! Does it not give you the rank

conception or image of a goat, or town-bull, or a satyr? nay, what is yet a filthier image than all the rest, that of a eunuch?

Eliza. What then? I can think of a goat, a bull, or a satyr, without any hurt.

Oliv. Ay; but cousin, one cannot stop there.

Eliza. I can, cousin.

Oliv. O no; for when you have those filthy creatures in your head once, the next thing you think, is what they do; as their defiling of honest men's beds and couches, rapes upon sleeping and waking country virgins under hedges, and on haycocks. Nay, further—

Eliza. Nay, no farther, cousin. We have enough of your comment on the play, which will make me more ashamed than the play itself.

Oliv. O, believe me, 'tis a filthy play! and you may take my word for a filthy play as soon as another's. But the filthiest thing in that play, or any other play, is—

Eliza. Pray keep it to yourself, if it be so.

Oliv. No, faith, you shall know it; I'm resolved to make you out of love with the play. I say, the lewdest, filthiest thing is his *china*; nay, I will never forgive the beastly author his *china*. He has quite taken away the reputation of poor china itself, and sullied the most innocent and pretty furniture of a lady's chamber; insomuch that I was fain to break all my defiled vessels. You see I have none left; nor you, I hope.

Eliza. You'll pardon me, I cannot think the worse of my china for that of the playhouse.

Oliv. Why, you will not keep any now, sure! 'Tis now as unfit an ornament for a lady's chamber as the pictures that come from Italy and other hot countries; as appears by their nudities, which I always cover, or scratch out, wheresoe'er I find 'em. But china! out upon't, filthy china! nasty, debauched china!

Eliza. All this will not put me out of conceit with china, nor the play, which is acted to-day, or another of the same beastly author's, as you call him, which I'll go see.

Oliv. You will not, sure! nay, you sha' not venture your reputation by going, and mine by leaving me alone with two men here: nay, you'll disoblige me for ever, if— [*Pulls her back.*

Eliza. I stay!—your servant. [*Exit.*

Oliv. Well—but, my lord, though you justify everybody, you cannot in earnest uphold so beastly a writer, whose ink is so smutty, as one may say.

Plaus. Faith, I dare swear the poor man did not think to disoblige the ladies, by any amorous, soft, passionate, luscious saying in his play.

Oliv. Fy, my lord! But what think you, Mr. Novel, of the play? though I know you are a friend to all that are new.

Nov. Faith, madam, I must confess, the new plays would not be the worse for my advice, but I could never get the silly rogues, the poets, to mind what I say; but I'll tell you what counsel I gave the surly fool you spake of.

Oliv. What was't?

Nov. Faith, to put his play into rhyme; for rhyme, you know, often makes mystical nonsense pass with the critics for wit, and a double-meaning saying with the ladies, for soft, tender, and moving passion. But now I talk of passion, I saw your old lover this morning—Captain— [*Whispers.*

Enter MANLY, FREEMAN, *and* FIDELIA *standing behind.*

Oliv. Whom?—nay, you need not whisper.

Man. We are luckily got hither unobserved.—How! in a close conversation with these supple rascals, the outcasts of sempstresses' shops!

Free. Faith, pardon her, captain, that, since she could no longer be entertained with your manly bluntness and honest love, she takes up with the pert chat and common-place flattery of these fluttering parrots of the town, apes and echoes of men only.

Man. Do not you, sir, play the echo too, mock me, dally with my own words, and show yourself as impertinent as they are.

Free. Nay, captain—

Fid. Nay, lieutenant, do not excuse her; methinks she looks very kindly upon 'em both, and seems to be pleased with what that fool there says to her.

Man. You lie, sir! and hold your peace, that I may not be provoked to give you a worse reply.

Oliv. Manly returned, d'ye say! and is he safe?

Nov. My lord saw him too.—Hark you, my lord. [*Whispers to* PLAUSIBLE.

Man. She yet seems concerned for my safety, and perhaps they are admitted now here but for their news of me: for intelligence indeed is the common passport of nauseous fools, when they go their round of good tables and houses. [*Aside.*

Oliv. I heard of his fighting only, without particulars, and confess I always loved his brutal courage, because it made me hope it might rid me of his more brutal love.

Man. What's that? [*Aside.*

Oliv. But is he at last returned, d'ye say, unhurt?

Nov. Ay, faith, without doing his business; for the rogue has been these two years pretending to a wooden leg, which he would take from fortune, as kindly as the staff of a marshal of France, and rather read his name in a gazette—

Oliv. Than in the entail of a good estate.

Man. So! [*Aside.*

Nov. I have an ambition, I must confess, of losing my heart before such a fair enemy as yourself, madam; but that silly rogues should be ambitious of losing their arms, and—

Oliv. Looking like a pair of compasses.

Nov. But he has no use of his arms but to set 'em on kimbow, for he never pulls off his hat, at least not to me, I'm sure; for you must know, madam, he has a fanatical hatred to good company: he can't abide me.

Plaus. O, be not so severe to him, as to say he hates good company: for I assure you he has a great respect, esteem and kindness for me.

Man. That kind, civil rogue has spoken yet ten thousand times worse of me than t'other. [*Aside.*

Oliv. Well, if he be returned, Mr. Novel, then shall I be pestered again with his boisterous sea-love; have my alcove smell like a cabin, my chamber perfumed with his tarpaulin Brandenburgh; and hear volleys of brandy-sighs, enough to make a fog in one's room. Foh! I hate a lover that smells like Thames-street!

Man. [*Aside.*] I can bear no longer, and need hear no more.—[*To* OLIVIA.] But since you have these two pulvillio boxes, these essence-bottles, this pair of musk-cats here, I hope I may venture to come yet nearer you.

Oliv. Overheard us then!

Nov. I hope he heard me not. [*Aside.*

Plaus. Most noble and heroic captain, your most obliged, faithful, humble servant.

Nov. Dear tar, thy humble servant.

Man. Away!—[*Thrusts* NOVEL *and* PLAUSIBLE *on each side.*] Madam—

Oliv. Nay, I think I have fitted you for listening.

Man. You have fitted me for believing you could not be fickle, though you were young; could not dissemble love, though 'twas your interest; nor be vain, though you were handsome; nor break your promise, though to a parting lover; nor abuse your best friend, though you had wit: but I take not your contempt of me worse than your esteem, or civility for these things here, though you know 'em.

Nov. Things!

Plaus. Let the captain rally a little.

Man. Yes, things! Canst thou be angry, thou thing? [*Coming up to* NOVEL.

Nov. No, since my lord says you speak in raillery; for though your sea-raillery be something rough, yet, I confess, we use one another too as bad every day at Locket's, and never quarrel for the matter.

Plaus. Nay, noble captain, be not angry with him.—A word with you, I beseech you—

[*Whispers to* MANLY.

Oliv. Well, we women, like the rest of the cheats of the world, when our cullies or creditors have found us out, and will or can trust no longer, pay debts and satisfy obligations with a quarrel, the kindest present a man can make to his mistress, when he can make no more presents. For oftentimes in love, as at cards, we are forced to play foul, only to give over the game; and use our lovers like the cards, when we can get no more by them, throw 'em up in a pet upon the first dispute.

[*Aside.*

Man. My lord, all that you have made me know by your whispering, which I knew not before, is, that you have a stinking breath; there's a secret for your secret.

Plaus. Pshaw! pshaw!

Man. But, madam, tell me, pray, what was't about this spark could take you? Was it the merit of his fashionable impudence; the briskness of his noise, the wit of his laugh, his judgment, or fancy in his garniture? or was it a well-trimmed glove, or the scent of it, that charmed you?

Nov. Very well, sir: 'gad these sea-captains make nothing of dressing. But let me tell you, sir, a man by his dress, as much as by anything, shows his wit and judgment; nay, and his courage too.

Free. How, his courage, Mr. Novel?

Nov. Why, for example, by red breeches, tucked-up hair or peruke, a greasy broad belt, and now-a-days a short sword.

Man. Thy courage will appear more by thy belt than thy sword, I dare swear.—Then, madam, for this gentle piece of courtesy, this man of tame honour, what could you find in him? Was it his languishing affected tone? his mannerly look? his second-hand flattery? the refuse of the playhouse tiring-rooms? or his slavish obsequiousness in watching at the door of your box at the playhouse, for your hand to your chair? or his janty way of playing with your fan? or was it the gunpowder spot on his hand, or the jewel in his ear, that purchased your heart?

Oliv. Good jealous captain, no more of your—

Plaus. No, let him go on, madam, for perhaps he may make you laugh: and I would contribute to your pleasure any way.

Man. Gentle rogue!

Oliv. No, noble captain, you cannot sure think anything could take me more than that heroic title of yours, captain; for you know we women love honour inordinately.

Nov. Ha! ha! faith, she is with thee, bully, for thy raillery.

Man. Faith, so shall I be with you, no bully, for your grinning. [*Aside to* NOVEL.

Oliv. Then that noble lion-like mien of yours, that soldier-like, weather-beaten complexion, and that manly roughness of your voice; how can they otherwise than charm us women, who hate effeminacy!

Nov. Ha! ha! faith I can't hold from laughing.

Man. Nor shall I from kicking anon.

[*Aside to* NOVEL.

Oliv. And then, that captain-like carelessness in your dress, but especially your scarf; 'twas just such another, only a little higher tied, made me in love with my tailor as he passed by my window the last training-day; for we women adore a martial man, and you have nothing wanting to make you more one, or more agreeable, but a wooden leg.

Plaus. Nay, i'faith, there your ladyship was a wag, and it was fine, just, and well rallied.

Nov. Ay, ay, madam, with you ladies too, martial men must needs be very killing.

Man. Peace, you Bartholomew-fair buffoons! And be not you vain that these laugh on your side, for they will laugh at their own dull jests; but no more of 'em, for I will only suffer now this lady to be witty and merry.

Oliv. You would not have your panegyric interrupted. I go on then to your humour. Is there anything more agreeable than the pretty sullenness of that? than the greatness of your courage, which most of all appears in your spirit of contradiction? for you dare give all mankind the lie; and your opinion is your only mistress, for you renounce that too, when it becomes another man's.

Nov. Ha! ha! I cannot hold, I must laugh at thee, tar, faith!

Plaus. And i'faith, dear captain, I beg your pardon, and leave to laugh at you too, though I protest I mean you no hurt; but when a lady rallies, a stander-by must be complaisant, and do her reason in laughing: ha! ha!

Man. Why, you impudent, pitiful wretches, you presume sure upon your effeminacy to urge me; for you are in all things so like women, that you may think it in me a kind of cowardice to beat you.

Oliv. No hectoring, good captain.

Man. Or, perhaps, you think this lady's presence secures you; but have a care, she has talked herself out of all the respect I had for her; and by using me ill before you, has given me a privilege of using you so before her: but if you would preserve your respect to her, and not be beaten before her, go, begone immediately.

Nov. Begone! what?

Plaus. Nay, worthy, noble, generous, captain—

Man. Begone, I say!

Nov. Begone again! to us begone!

Man. No chattering, baboons, instantly begone, or—

[*Puts them out of the room:* NOVEL *struts,* PLAUSIBLE *cringes.*

Nov. Well, madam, we'll go make the cards ready in your bedchamber: sure you will not stay long with him. [*Exeunt* PLAUSIBLE *and* NOVEL.

Oliv. Turn hither your rage, good captain Swaggerhuff, and be saucy with your mistress, like a true captain; but be civil to your rivals and betters, and do not threaten anything but me here; no, not so much as my windows; nor do not think yourself in the lodgings of one of your suburb mistresses beyond the Tower.

Man. Do not give me cause to think so; for those less infamous women part with their lovers, just as you did from me, with unforced vows of constancy and floods of willing tears; but the same winds bear away their lovers and their vows: and for their grief, if the credulous unexpected fools return, they find new comforters, fresh cullies, such as I found here. The mercenary love of those women too suffers shipwreck with their gallants' fortunes; now you have heard chance has used me scurvily, therefore you do too. Well, persevere in your ingratitude, falsehood, and disdain; have constancy in something, and I promise you to be as just to your real scorn as I was to your feigned love; and henceforward will despise, contemn, hate, loathe, and detest you most faithfully.

Enter LETTICE.

Oliv. Get the ombre-cards ready in the next room, Lettice, and—

[*Whispers to* LETTICE, *who goes out.*

Free. Bravely resolved, captain!

Fid. And you'll be sure to keep your word, I hope, sir?

Man. I hope so too.

Fid. Do you but hope it, sir? If you are not as good as your word, 'twill be the first time you ever bragged, sure.

Man. She has restored my reason with my heart.

Free. But now you talk of restoring, captain, there are other things, which next to one's heart one would not part with; I mean your jewels and money, which it seems she has, sir.

Man. What's that to you, sir?

Free. Pardon me, whatsoever is yours I have a share in't I'm sure, which I will not lose for asking, though you may be too generous or too angry now to do't yourself.

Fid. Nay, then I'll make bold to make my claim too. [*Both going towards* OLIVIA.

Man. Hold, you impertinent, officious fops—[*Aside.*] How have I been deceived!

Free. Madam, there are certain appurtenances to a lover's heart, called jewels, which always go along with it.

Fid. And which, with lovers, have no value in themselves, but from the heart they come with. Our captain's, madam, it seems you scorn to keep, and much more will those worthless things without it, I am confident.

Oliv. A gentleman so well made as you are, may be confident—us easy women could not deny you anything you ask, if 'twere for yourself; but, since 'tis for another, I beg your leave to give him my answer.—[*Aside.*] An agreeable young fellow this—and would not be my aversion.—[*Aloud.*] Captain, your young friend here has a very persuading face, I confess; yet you might have asked me yourself for those trifles you left with me, which (hark you a little, for I dare trust you with the secret; you are a man of so much honour, I'm sure) I say then, not expecting your return, or hoping ever to see you again, I have delivered your jewels to—

Man. Whom?

Oliv. My husband.

Man. Your husband!

Oliv. Ay, my husband. For since you could leave me, I am lately and privately married to one, who is a man of so much honour and experience in the world, that I dare not ask him for your jewels again to restore 'em to you; lest he should conclude you never would have parted with 'em to me on any other score but the exchange of my honour: which rather than you'd let me lose, you'd lose I'm sure yourself, those trifles of yours.

Man. Triumphant impudence! but married too!

Oliv. O, speak not so loud, my servants know it not: I am married; there's no resisting one's destiny or love, you know.

Man. Why, did you love him too?

Oliv. Most passionately; nay, love him now, though I have married him, and he me: which mutual love I hope you are too good, too generous a man to disturb, by any future claim, or visits to me. 'Tis true, he is now absent in the country, but returns shortly; therefore I beg of you, for your own ease and quiet, and my honour, you will never see me more.

Man. I wish I had never seen you.

Oliv. But if you should ever have anything to say to me hereafter, let that young gentleman there be your messenger.

Man. You would be kinder to him; I find he should be welcome.

Oliv. Alas! his youth would keep my husband from suspicions, and his visits from scandal; for we women may have pity for such as he, but no love: and I already think you do not well to spirit him away to sea; and the sea is already but too rich with the spoils of the shore.

Man. True perfect woman! If I could say anything more injurious to her now, I would; for I could out-rail a bilked whore, or a kicked coward; but now I think on't, that were rather to discover my love than hatred; and I must not talk, for something I must do. [*Aside.*

Oliv. I think I have given him enough of me now, never to be troubled with him again. [*Aside.*

Re-enter LETTICE.

Well, Lettice, are the cards and all ready within? I come then.—Captain, I beg your pardon: you will not make one at ombre?

Man. No, madam, but I'll wish you a little good luck before you go.

Oliv. No, if you would have me thrive, curse me: for that you'll do heartily, I suppose.

Man. Then if you will have it so, may all the curses light upon you, women ought to fear, and you deserve!—First, may the curse of loving play attend your sordid covetousness, and fortune cheat you, by trusting to her, as you have cheated me; the curse of pride, or a good reputation, fall on your lust; the curse of affectation on your beauty; the

curse of your husband's company on your pleasures; and the curse of your gallant's disappointments in his absence; and the curse of scorn, jealousy, or despair on your love; and then the curse of loving on!

Oliv. And to requite all your curses, I will only return you your last; may the curse of loving me still fall upon your proud hard heart, that could be so cruel to me in these horrid curses! but heaven forgive you! [*Exit.*

Man. Hell and the devil reward thee!

Free. Well, you see now, mistresses, like friends, are lost by letting 'em handle your money; and most women are such kind of witches, who can have no power over a man, unless you give 'em money: but when once they have got any from you, they never leave you till they have all. Therefore I never dare give a woman a farthing.

Man. Well, there is yet this comfort by losing one's money with one's mistress, a man is out of danger of getting another; of being made prize again by love, who, like a pirate, takes you by spreading false colours: but when once you have run your ship a-ground, the treacherous picaroon loofs; so by your ruin you save yourself from slavery at least.

Enter Boy.

Boy. Mrs. Lettice, here's madam Blackacre come to wait upon her honour.

[*Exeunt* LETTICE *and* Boy.

Man. D'ye hear that? Let us begone before she comes: for henceforward I'll avoid the whole damned sex for ever, and woman as a sinking ship.

[*Exeunt* MANLY *and* FIDELIA.

Free. And I'll stay, to revenge on her your quarrel to the sex: for out of love to her jointure, and hatred to business, I would marry her, to make an end of her thousand suits, and my thousand engagements, to the comfort of two unfortunate sort of people, my plaintiffs and her defendants, my creditors and her adversaries.

Enter Widow BLACKACRE, *led in by* Major OLDFOX, *and* JERRY BLACKACRE *following, laden with green bags.*

Wid. 'Tis an arrant sea-ruffian; but I am glad I met with him at last, to serve him again, major; for the last service was not good in law. Boy, duck, Jerry, where is my paper of memorandums? Give me, child: so. Where is my cousin Olivia now, my kind relation?

Free. Here is one that would be your kind relation, madam.

Wid. What mean you, sir?

Free. Why, faith, (to be short,) to marry you, widow.

Wid. Is not this the wild rude person we saw at captain Manly's?

Jer. Ay, forsooth, an't please.

Wid. What would you? what are you? Marry me!

Free. Ay, faith; for I am a younger brother, and you are a widow.

Wid. You are an impertinent person; and go about your business.

Free. I have none, but to marry thee, widow.

Wid. But I have other business, I'd have you to know.

Free. But you have no business a-nights, widow; and I'll make you pleasanter business than any you have. For a-nights, I assure you, I am a man of great business; for the business—

Wid. Go, I'm sure you're an idle fellow.

Free. Try me but, widow, and employ me as you find my abilities and industry.

Old. Pray be civil to the lady, Mr. —— she is a person of quality, a person that is no person—

Free. Yes, but she's a person that is a widow. Be you mannerly to her, because you are to pretend only to be her squire, to arm her to her lawyer's chambers: but I will be impudent and bawdy; for she must love and marry me.

Wid. Marry come up, you saucy familiar Jack! You think, with us widows, 'tis no more than up, and ride. Gad forgive me! now-a-days, every idle, young, hectoring, roaring companion, with a pair of turned red breeches, and a broad back, thinks to carry away any widow of the best degree. But I'd have you to know, sir, all widows are not got, like places at court, by impudence and importunity only.

Old. No, no, soft, soft, you are a young man, and not fit—

Free. For a widow? yes sure, old man, the fitter.

Old. Go to, go to; if others had not laid in their claims before you—

Free. Not you, I hope.

Old. Why not I, sir? sure I am a much more proportionable match for her than you, sir; I, who am an elder brother, of a comfortable fortune, and of equal years with her.

Wid. How's that, you unmannerly person? I'd have you to know, I was born in *Ann' undec' Caroli prim'.*

Old. Your pardon, lady, your pardon: be not offended with your very humble servant—But, I say, sir, you are a beggarly younger brother, twenty years younger than her, without any land or stock, but your great stock of impudence: therefore what pretension can you have to her?

Free. You have made it for me: first, because I am a younger brother.

Wid. Why, is that a sufficient plea to a relict? how appears it, sir? by what foolish custom?

Free. By custom time out of mind only. Then, sir, because I have nothing to keep me after her death, I am the likelier to take care of her life. And for my being twenty years younger than her, and having a sufficient stock of impudence, I leave it to her whether they will be valid exceptions to me in her widow's law or equity.

Old. Well, she has been so long in Chancery, that I'll stand to her equity and decree between us. Come, lady, pray snap up this young snap at first, or we shall be troubled with him. Give him a city-widow's answer, that is, with all the ill-breeding imaginable. — [*Aside to the* Widow.] Come, madam.

Wid. Well then, to make an end of this foolish wooing, for nothing interrupts business more: first, for you, major—

Old. You declare in my favour, then?

Free. What, direct the court! come, young lawyer, thou shalt be a council for me. [*To* JERRY.

Jer. Gad, I shall betray your cause then, as well as an older lawyer; never stir.

Wid. First, I say, for you, major, my walking hospital of an ancient foundation; thou bag of mummy, that wouldst fall asunder, if 'twere not for cerecloths—

Old. How, lady!

Free. Ha! ha!—

Jer. Hey, brave mother! use all suitors thus, for my sake.

Wid. Thou withered, hobbling, distorted cripple; nay, thou art a cripple all over: wouldst thou make me the staff of thy age, the crutch of thy decrepidness? me—

Free. Well said, widow! Faith, thou wouldst make a man love thee now, without dissembling.

Wid. Thou senseless, impertinent, quibbling, drivelling, feeble, paralytic, impotent, fumbling, frigid nincompoop!

Jer. Hey, brave mother, for calling of names, i'fac!

Wid. Wouldst thou make a caudle-maker, a nurse of me? can't you be bedrid without a bedfellow? won't your swan-skins, furs, flannels, and the scorched trencher, keep you warm there? would you have me your Scotch warming-pan, with a pox to you! me—

Old. O heavens!

Free. I told you I should be thought the fitter man, major.

Jer. Ay, you old fobus, and you would have been my guardian, would you, to have taken care of my estate, that half of't should never come to me, by letting long leases at pepper-corn rents?

Wid. If I would have married an old man, 'tis well known I might have married an earl, nay, what's more, a judge, and been covered the winter nights with the lamb-skins, which I prefer to the ermines of nobles. And dost thou think I would wrong my poor minor there for you?

Free. Your minor is a chopping minor, God bless him! [*Strokes* Jerry *on the head.*

Old. Your minor may be a major of horse or foot, for his bigness; and it seems you will have the cheating of your minor to yourself.

Wid. Pray, sir, bear witness:—cheat my minor! I'll bring my action of the case for the slander.

Free. Nay, I would bear false witness for thee now, widow, since you have done me justice, and have thought me the fitter man for you.

Wid. Fair and softly, sir, 'tis my minor's case, more than my own; and I must do him justice now on you.

Free. How!

Old. So then.

Wid. You are, first, (I warrant,) some renegado from the inns of court and the law; and thou'lt come to suffer for't by the law, that is, be hanged.

Jer. Not about your neck, forsooth, I hope.

Free. But, madam—

Old. Hear the court.

Wid. Thou art some debauched, drunken, lewd, hectoring, gaming companion, and wantest some widow's old gold to nick upon; but I thank you, sir, that's for my lawyers.

Free. Faith, we should ne'er quarrel about that; for guineas would serve my turn. But, widow—

Wid. Thou art a foul-mouthed boaster of thy lust, a mere bragadochio of thy strength for wine and women, and wilt belie thyself more than thou dost women, and art every way a base deceiver of women; and would deceive me too, would you?

Free. Nay, faith, widow, this is judging without seeing the evidence.

Wid. I say, you are a worn-out whoremaster at five-and-twenty, both in body and fortune; and cannot be trusted by the common wenches of the town, lest you should not pay 'em; nor by the wives of the town lest you should pay 'em: so you want women, and would have me your bawd to procure 'em for you.

Free. Faith, if you had any good acquaintance, widow, 'twould be civilly done of thee; for I am just come from sea.

Wid. I mean, you would have me keep you, that you might turn keeper; for poor widows are only used like bawds by you: you go to church with us, but to get other women to lie with. In fine, you are a cheating, cozening spendthrift; and having sold your own annuity, would waste my jointure.

Jer. And make havoc of our estate personal, and all our gilt plate; I should soon be picking up all our mortgaged apostle-spoons, bowls, and beakers, out of most of the ale-houses betwixt Hercules-pillars and the Boatswain in Wapping; nay, and you'd be scouring amongst my trees, and make 'em knock down one another, like routed reeling watchmen at midnight; would you so, bully?

Free. Nay, prithee, widow, hear me.

Wid. No, sir; I'd have you to know, thou pitiful, paltry, lath-backed fellow, if I would have married a young man, 'tis well known I could have had any young heir in Norfolk, nay, the hopefullest young man this day at the King's-bench bar; I that am a relict and executrix of known plentiful assets and parts, who understand myself and the law. And would you have me under covert-baron again? No, sir, no covert-baron for me.

Free. But, dear widow, hear me. I value you only, not your jointure.

Wid. Nay, sir, hold there; I know your love to a widow is covetousness of her jointure: and a widow, a little stricken in years, with a good jointure, is like an old mansion-house in a good purchase, never valued, but take one, take t'other: and perhaps, when you are in possession, you'd neglect it, let it drop to the ground, for want of necessary repairs or expenses upon't.

Free. No, widow, one would be sure to keep all tight, when one is to forfeit one's lease by dilapidation.

Wid. Fy! fy! I neglect my business with this foolish discourse of love. Jerry, child, let me see the list of the jury: I'm sure my cousin Olivia has some relations amongst them. But where is she?

Free. Nay, widow, but hear me one word only.

Wid. Nay, sir, no more, pray. I will no more hearken to your foolish love-motions, than to offers of arbitration. [*Exeunt* Widow *and* Jerry.

Free. Well, I'll follow thee yet; for he that has a pretension at court, or to a widow, must never give over for a little ill-usage.

Old. Therefore, I'll get her by assiduity, patience, and long sufferings, which you will not undergo; for you idle young fellows leave off love when it comes to be business; and industry gets more women than love.

Free. Ay, industry, the fool's and old man's merit.—But I'll be industrious too, and make a business on't, and get her by law, wrangling, and contests, and not by sufferings: and, because you are no dangerous rival, I'll give thee counsel, major:—

If you litigious widow e'er would gain,
Sigh not to her, but by the law complain;
To her, as to a bawd, defendant sue
With statutes, and make justice pimp for you.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Westminster-Hall.*

Enter MANLY *and* FREEMAN, *two* Sailors *behind.*

Man. I hate this place worse than a man that has inherited a chancery suit: I wish I were well out on't again.

Free. Why, you need not be afraid of this place: for a man without money needs no more fear a crowd of lawyers than a crowd of pickpockets.

Man. This, the reverend of the law would have thought the palace or residence of Justice; but, if it be, she lives here with the state of a Turkish emperor, rarely seen; and besieged rather than defended by her numerous black-guard here.

Free. Methinks 'tis like one of their own halls in Christmas time, whither from all parts fools bring their money, to try by the dice (not the worst judges) whether it shall be their own or no: but after a tedious fretting and wrangling, they drop away all their money on both sides; and, finding neither the better, at last go emptily and lovingly away together to the tavern, joining their curses against the young lawyer's box, that sweeps all, like the old ones.

Man. Spoken like a revelling Christmas lawyer.

Free. Yes, I was one, I confess, but was fain to leave the law, out of conscience, and fall to making false musters: rather choose to cheat the king than his subjects; plunder rather than take fees.

Man. Well, a plague and a purse-famine light on the law; and that female limb of it who dragged me hither to-day! But prithee go see if, in that crowd of daggled gowns there, [*pointing to a crowd of* Lawyers *at the end of the stage,*] thou canst find her. [*Exit* FREEMAN.

How hard it is to be a hypocrite!
At least to me, who am but newly so.
I thought it once a kind of knavery,
Nay, cowardice, to hide one's fault; but now
The common frailty, love, becomes my shame.
He must not know I love the ungrateful still,
Lest he contemn me more than she; for I,
It seems, can undergo a woman's scorn,
But not a man's—

Enter FIDELIA.

Fid. Sir, good sir, generous captain.

Man. Prithee, kind impertinence, leave me. Why shouldst thou follow me, flatter my generosity now, since thou knowest I have no money left? if I had it, I'd give it thee, to buy my quiet.

Fid. I never followed yet, sir, reward or fame, but you alone; nor do I now beg anything but leave to share your miseries. You should not be a niggard of 'em, since, methinks, you have enough to spare. Let me follow you now, because you hate me, as you have often said.

Man. I ever hated a coward's company, I must confess.

Fid. Let me follow you till I am none, then; for you, I'm sure, will go through such worlds of dangers, that, I shall be inured to 'em; nay, I shall be afraid of your anger more than danger, and so turn valiant out of fear. Dear captain, do not cast me off till you have tried me once more: do not, do not go to sea again without me.

Man. Thou to sea! to court, thou fool; remember the advice I gave thee: thou art a handsome spaniel, and canst fawn naturally: go, busk about and run thyself into the next great man's lobby; first fawn upon the slaves without, and then run into the lady's bedchamber; thou mayst be admitted at last to tumble her bed. Go seek, I say, and lose me; for I am not able to keep thee; I have not bread for myself.

Fid. Therefore I will not go, because then I may help and serve you.

Man. Thou!

Fid. I warrant you, sir; for, at worst, I could beg or steal for you.

Man. Nay, more bragging! Dost thou not know there's venturing your life in stealing? Go, prithee, away: thou art as hard to shake off as that flattering, effeminating mischief, love.

Fid. Love did you name? Why, you are not so miserable as to be yet in love, sure?

Man. No, no, prithee away, begone, or—[*Aside.*] I had almost discovered my love and shame; well, if I had, that thing could not think the worse of me—or if he did—no—yes, he shall know it—he shall—but then I must never leave him, for they are such secrets, that make parasites and pimps lords of their masters; for any slavery or tyranny is easier than love's.—[*Aloud*] Come hither, since thou art so forward to serve me: hast thou but resolution enough to endure the torture of a secret? for such to some is insupportable.

Fid. I would keep it as safe as if your dear, precious life depended on't.

Man. Damn your dearness! It concerns more than my life,—my honour.

Fid. Doubt it not, sir.

Man. And do not discover it, by too much fear of discovering it; but have a great care you let not Freeman find it out.

Fid. I warrant you, sir, I am already all joy with the hopes of your commands; and shall be all wings in the execution of 'em: speak quickly, sir.

Man. You said you'd beg for me.

Fid. I did, sir.

Man. Then you shall beg for me.

Fid. With all my heart, sir.

Man. That is, pimp for me.

Fid. How, sir?

Man. D'ye start! Thinkest thou, thou couldst do me any other service? Come, no dissembling honour: I know you can do it handsomely, thou wert made for't. You have lost your time with me at sea, you must recover it.

Fid. Do not, sir, beget yourself more reasons for your aversion to me, and make my obedience to you a fault; I am the unfittest in the world to do you such a service.

Man. Your cunning arguing against it shows but how fit you are for it. No more dissembling: here, (I say,) you must go use it for me to Olivia.

Fid. To her, sir?

Man. Go flatter, lie, kneel, promise, anything to get her for me: I cannot live unless I have her. Didst thou not say thou wouldst do anything to save my life? and she said you had a persuading face.

Fid. But did not you say, sir, your honour was dearer to you than your life? and would you have me contribute to the loss of that, and carry love from you to the most infamous, most false, and—

Man. And most beautiful!— [*Sighs aside.*

Fid. Most ungrateful woman that ever lived; for sure she must be so, that could desert you so soon, use you so basely, and so lately too: do not, do not forget it, sir, and think—

Man. No, I will not forget it, but think of revenge; I will lie with her out of revenge. Go, begone, and prevail for me, or never see me more.

Fid. You scorned her last night.

Man. I know not what I did last night; I dissembled last night.

Fid. Heavens!

Man. Begone, I say, and bring me love or compliance back, or hopes at least, or I'll never see thy face again, by—

Fid. O, do not swear, sir! first hear me.

Man. I'm impatient, away! you'll find me here till twelve. [*Turns away.*

Fid. Sir—

Man. Not one word, no insinuating argument more, or soothing persuasion; you'll have need of all your rhetoric with her: go strive to alter her, not me; begone. [*Retires to the end of the stage, and exit.*

Fid. Should I discover to him now my sex,
And lay before him his strange cruelty,
'Twould but incense it more.—No, 'tis not time.
For his love must I then betray my own?
Were ever love or chance till now severe?
Or shifting woman posed with such a task?
Forced to beg that which kills her, if obtain'd,
And give away her lover not to lose him! [*Exit.*

[*Enter* Widow Blackacre, *in the middle of half-a-dozen* Lawyers, *whispered to by a fellow in black*, Jerry Blackacre *following the crowd.*

Wid. Offer me a reference, you saucy companion you! d'ye know who you speak to? Art thou a solicitor in chancery, and offer a reference? A pretty fellow! Mr. Serjeant Ploddon, here's a fellow has the impudence to offer me a reference!

Serj. Plod. Who's that has the impudence to offer a reference within these walls?

Wid. Nay, for a splitter of causes to do't!

Serj. Plod. No, madam; to a lady learned in the law, as you are, the offer of a reference were to impose upon you.

Wid. No, no, never fear me for a reference, Mr. Serjeant. But come, have you not forgot your brief? Are you sure you shan't make the mistake of—hark you—[*Whispers.*] Go then, go to your court of Common Pleas, and say one thing over and over again: you do it so naturally, you'll never be suspected for protracting time.

Serj. Plod. Come, I know the course of the court, and your business. [*Exit.*

Wid. Let's see, Jerry, where are my minutes? Come, Mr. Quaint, pray go talk a great deal for me in chancery, let your words be easy, and your sense hard; my cause requires it: branch it bravely, and deck my cause with flowers, that the snake may lie hidden. Go, go, and be sure you remember the decree of my Lord Chancellor, *Tricesimo quart'* of the queen.

Quaint. I will, as I see cause, extenuate or exemplify matter of fact; baffle truth with impudence; answer exceptions with questions, though never so impertinent; for reasons give 'em words; for law and equity, tropes and figures; and so relax and enervate the sinews of their argument with the oil of my eloquence. But when my lungs can reason no longer, and not being able to say anything more for our cause, say everything of our adversary; whose reputation, though never so clear and evident in the eye of the world, yet with sharp invectives—

Wid. Alias, Billingsgate.

Quaint. With poignant and sour invectives, I say, I will deface, wipe out, and obliterate his fair reputation, even as a record with the juice of lemons; and tell such a story, (for the truth on't is, all that we can do for our client in chancery, is telling a story,) a fine story, a long story, such a story—

Wid. Go, save thy breath for the cause; talk at the bar, Mr. Quaint: you are so copiously fluent, you can weary any one's ears sooner than your own tongue. Go, weary our adversaries' counsel, and the court; go, thou art a fine-spoken person: adad, I shall make thy wife jealous of me, if you can but court the court into a decree for us. Go, get you gone, and remember—[*Whispers.*]—[*Exit* Quaint.]—Come, Mr. Blunder, pray bawl soundly for me, at the King's-bench, bluster, sputter, question, cavil; but be sure your argument be intricate enough to confound the court; and then you do my business. Talk what you will, but be sure your tongue never stand still; for your own noise will secure your sense from censure: 'tis like coughing or hemming when one has got the belly-ache, which stifles the unmannerly noise. Go, dear rogue, and succeed; and I'll invite thee, ere it be long, to more soused venison.

Blun. I'll warrant you, after your verdict, your judgment shall not be arrested upon if's and and's. [*Exit.*

Wid. Come, Mr. Petulant, let me give you some new instructions for our cause in the Exchequer. Are the barons sate?

Pet. Yes, no; may be they are, may be they are not: what know I? what care I?

Wid. Heyday! I wish you would but snap up the counsel on t'other side anon at the bar as much; and have a little more patience with me, that I might instruct you a little better.

Pet. You instruct me! what is my brief for, mistress?

Wid. Ay, but you seldom read your brief but at the bar, if you do it then.

Pet. Perhaps I do, perhaps I don't, and perhaps 'tis time enough: pray hold yourself contented, mistress.

Wid. Nay, if you go there too, I will not be contented, sir; though you, I see, will lose my cause for want of speaking, I wo' not: you shall hear me, and shall be instructed. Let's see your brief.

Pet. Send your solicitor to me. Instructed by a woman! I'd have you to know, I do not wear a bar-gown—

Wid. By a woman! and I'd have you to know, I am no common woman; but a woman conversant in the laws of the land, as well as yourself, though I have no bar-gown.

Pet. Go to, go to, mistress, you are impertinent, and there's your brief for you: instruct me! [*Flings her breviate at her.*

Wid. Impertinent to me, you saucy Jack, you!

you return my breviate, but where's my fee? you'll be sure to keep that, and scan that so well, that if there chance to be but a brass half-crown in't, one's sure to hear on't again: would you would but look on your breviate half so narrowly! But pray give me my fee too, as well as my brief.

Pet. Mistress, that's without precedent. When did a counsel ever return his fee, pray? and you are impertinent and ignorant to demand it.

Wid. Impertinent again, and ignorant, to me! Gadsbodikins, you puny upstart in the law, to use me so! you green-bag carrier, you murderer of unfortunate causes, the clerk's ink is scarce off of your fingers,—you that newly come from lamp-blacking the judges' shoes, and are not fit to wipe mine; you call me impertinent and ignorant! I would give thee a cuff on the ear, sitting the courts, if I were ignorant. Marry-gep, if it had not been for me, thou hadst been yet but a hearing counsel at the bar. [*Exit* PETULANT.

Enter MR. BUTTONGOWN, *crossing the stage in haste.*

Mr. Buttongown, Mr. Buttongown, whither so fast? what, won't you stay till we are heard?

But. I cannot, Mrs. Blackacre, I must be at the council, my lord's cause stays there for me.

Wid. And mine suffers here.

But. I cannot help it.

Wid. I'm undone.

But. What's that to me?

Wid. Consider the five-pound fee, if not my cause: that was something to you.

But. Away, away! pray be not so troublesome, mistress: I must be gone.

Wid. Nay, but consider a little: I am your old client, my lord but a new one; or let him be what he will, he will hardly be a better client to you than myself: I hope you believe I shall be in law as long as I live; therefore am no despicable client. Well, but go to your lord; I know you expect he should make you a judge one day; but I hope his promise to you will prove a true lord's promise. But that he might be sure to fail you, I wish you had his bond for't.

But. But what, will you yet be thus impertinent, mistress?

Wid. Nay, I beseech you, sir, stay; if it be but to tell me my lord's case: come, in short—

But Nay, then— [*Exit.*

Wid. Well, Jerry, observe child, and lay it up for hereafter. These are those lawyers who, by being in all causes, are in none: therefore if you would have 'em for you, let your adversary fee 'em; for he may chance to depend upon them; and so, in being against thee, they'll be for thee.

Jer. Ay, mother; they put me in mind of the unconscionable wooers of widows, who undertake briskly their matrimonial business for their money; but when they have got it once, let who's will drudge for them. Therefore have a care of 'em, forsooth. There's advice for your advice.

Wid. Well said, boy.—Come, Mr. Splitcause, pray go see when my cause in Chancery comes on; and go speak with Mr. Quillit in the King's-bench, and Mr. Quirk in the Common Pleas, and see how our matters go there.

Enter Major OLDFOX.

Old. Lady, a good and propitious morning to you; and may all your causes go as well as if I myself were judge of 'em!

Wid. Sir, excuse me; I am busy, and cannot answer compliments in Westminster-hall.—Go, Mr. Splitcause, and come to me again to that bookseller's; there I'll stay for you, that you may be sure to find me.

Old. No, sir, come to the other bookseller's: I'll attend your ladyship thither. [*Exit* SPLITCAUSE.

Wid. Why to the other?

Old. Because he is my bookseller, lady.

Wid. What, to sell you lozenges for your catarrh? or medicines for your corns? What else can a major deal with a bookseller for?

Old. Lady, he prints for me.

Wid. Why, are you an author?

Old. Of some few essays; deign you, lady, to peruse 'em.—[*Aside.*] She is a woman of parts; and I must win her by showing mine.

Bookseller's Boy. Will you see Culpepper, mistress? Aristotle's Problems? The Complete Midwife?

Wid. No; let's see Dalton, Hughs, Shepherd, Wingate.

B. Boy. We have no law books.

Wid. No! you are a pretty bookseller then.

Old. Come, have you e'er a one of my essays left?

B. Boy. Yes, sir, we have enough, and shall always have 'em.

Old. How so?

B. Boy. Why, they are good, steady, lasting ware.

Old. Nay, I hope they will live; let's see.—Be pleased, madam, to peruse the poor endeavours of my pen: for I have a pen, though I say it, that— [*Gives her a book.*

Jer. Pray let me see St. George for Christendom, or, The Seven Champions of England.

Wid. No, no; give him the Young Clerk's Guide.—What, we shall have you read yourself into a humour of rambling and fighting, and studying military discipline, and wearing red breeches.

Old. Nay, if you talk of military discipline, show him my Treatise of the Art Military.

Wid. Hold; I would as willingly he should read a play.

Jer. O, pray forsooth, mother, let me have a play.

Wid. No, sirrah; there are young students of the law enough spoiled already by plays. They would make you in love with your laundress, or, what's worse, some queen of the stage that was a laundress; and so turn keeper before you are of age. [*Several crossing the stage.*] But stay, Jerry, is not that Mr. What d'ye-call-him, that goes there, he that offered to sell me a suit in chancery for five hundred pounds, for a hundred down, and only paying the clerk's fees?

Jer. Ay, forsooth, 'tis he.

Wid. Then stay here, and have a care of the bags, whilst I follow him.—Have a care of the bags, I say.

Jer. And do you have a care, forsooth, of the statute against champarty, I say. [*Exit* Widow.

Re-enter FREEMAN.

Free. [*Aside.*] So, there's a limb of my widow, which was wont to be inseparable from her: she can't be far.—[*Aloud.*] How now, my pretty son-in-law that shall be, where's my widow?

Jer. My mother, but not your widow, will be forthcoming presently.

Free. Your servant, major. What, are you buying furniture for a little sleeping closet, which you miscal a study? For you do only by your books, as by your wenches, bind 'em up neatly and make 'em fine, for other people to use 'em. And your bookseller is properly your upholsterer, for he furnishes your room, rather than your head.

Old. Well, well, good sea-lieutenant, study you your compass; that's more than your head can deal with.—[*Aside.*] I will go find out the widow, to keep her out of his sight, or he'll board her, whilst I am treating a peace. [*Exit.*

Jer. Nay, prithee, friend, now let me have but the Seven Champions. You shall trust me no longer than till my mother's Mr. Splitcause comes; for I hope he'll lend me wherewithal to pay for't.

Free. Lend thee! here, I'll pay him. Do you want money, squire? I'm sorry a man of your estate should want money.

Jer. Nay, my mother will ne'er let me be at age: and till then, she says—

Free. At age! why, you are at age already to have spent an estate, man. There are younger than you have kept their women these three years, have had half a dozen claps, and lost as many thousand pounds at play.

Jer. Ay, they are happy sparks! Nay, I know some of my schoolfellows, who, when we were at school, were two years younger than me; but now, I know not how, are grown men before me, and go where they will, and look to themselves. But my curmudgeonly mother won't allow me wherewithal to be a man of myself with.

Free. Why, there 'tis; I knew your mother was in fault. Ask but your schoolfellows what they did to be men of themselves.

Jer. Why, I know they went to law with their mothers: for they say, there's no good to be done upon a widow mother, till one goes to law with her; but mine is as plaguy a lawyer as any's of our inn. Then would she marry too, and cut down my trees. Now, I should hate, man, to have my father's wife kissed and slapped, and t'other thing too, (you know what I mean,) by another man: and our trees are the purest, tall, even, shady twigs, by my fa—

Free. Come, squire, let your mother and your trees fall as she pleases, rather than wear this gown and carry green bags all thy life, and be pointed at for a Tony. But you shall be able to deal with her yet the common way. Thou shalt make false love to some lawyer's daughter, whose father, upon the hopes of thy marrying her, shall lend thee money and law to preserve thy estate and trees: and thy mother is so ugly nobody will have her, if she cannot cut down thy trees.

Jer. Nay, if I had but anybody to stand by me, I am as stomachful as another.

Free. That will I: I'll not see any hopeful young gentleman abused.

B. Boy. By any but yourself. [*Aside.*

Jer. The truth on't is, mine's as arrant a widow-mother to her poor child as any's in England. She won't so much as let one have sixpence in one's pocket to see a motion, or the dancing of the ropes, or—

Free. Come, you shan't want money; there's gold for you.

Jer. O lord, sir, two guineas! D'ye lend me this? Is there no trick in't? Well, sir, I'll give you my bond for security.

Free. No, no; thou hast given me thy face for security: anybody would swear thou dost not look like a cheat. You shall have what you will of me; and if your mother will not be kinder to you, come to me, who will.

Jer. [*Aside.*] By my fa—he's a curious fine gentleman!—[*Aloud.*] But will you stand by one?

Free. If you can be resolute.

Jer. Can be resolved! Gad, if she gives me but a cross word, I'll leave her to-night, and come to you. But now I have got money, I'll go to Jack-of-all-Trades, at t'other end of the Hall, and buy the neatest purest things—

Free. [*Aside.*] And I'll follow the great boy, and my blow at his mother. Steal away the calf, and the cow will follow you.

[*Exit* JERRY, *followed by* FREEMAN.

Re-enter, on the other side, MANLY, Widow BLACKACRE, *and* OLDFOX.

Man. Damn your cause, can't you lose it without me? which you are like enough to do, if it be, as you say, an honest one: I will suffer no longer for't.

Wid. Nay, captain, I tell you, you are my prime witness; and the cause is just now coming on, Mr. Splitcause tells me. Lord, methinks you should take a pleasure in walking here, as half you see now do; for they have no business here, I assure you.

Man. Yes; but I'll assure you then, their business is to persecute me. But d'ye think I'll stay any longer, to have a rogue, because he knows my name, pluck me aside and whisper a news-book secret to me with a stinking breath? a second come piping angry from the court, and sputter in my face his tedious complaints against it? a third law-coxcomb, because he saw me once at a reader's dinner, come and put me a long law case, to make a discovery of his indefatigable dulness and my wearied patience? a fourth, a most barbarous civil rogue, who will keep a man half an hour in the crowd with a bowed body, and a hat off, acting the reformed sign of the Salutation tavern, to hear his bountiful professions of service and friendship, whilst he cares not if I were damned, and I am wishing him hanged out of my way?—I'd as soon run the gauntlet, as walk t'other turn.

Re-enter JERRY BLACKACRE, *without his Bags, but laden with Trinkets, which he endeavours to hide from his Mother, and followed at a distance by* FREEMAN.

Wid. O, are you come, sir? but where have you been, you ass? and how came you thus laden?

Jer. Look here, forsooth, mother; now here's a duck, here's a boar-cat, and here's an owl.

[*Making a noise with catcalls and other such like instruments.*

Wid. Yes, there is an owl, sir.

Old. He's an ungracious bird indeed.

Wid. But go, thou trangame, and carry back those trangames, which thou hast stolen or purloined; for nobody would trust a minor in Westminster-hall, sure.

Jer. Hold yourself contented, forsooth: I have these commodities by a fair bargain and sale; and there stands my witness and creditor.

Wid. How's that? What, sir, d'ye think to get

the mother by giving the child a rattle?—But where are my bags, my writings, you rascal?

Jer. O, la! where are they, indeed! [*Aside.*

Wid. How, sirrah? speak, come—

Man. You can tell her, Freeman, I suppose. [*Apart to him.*

Free. 'Tis true, I made one of your salt-water sharks steal 'em whilst he was eagerly choosing his commodities, as he calls 'em, in order to my design upon his mother. [*Apart to him.*

Wid. Won't you speak? Where were you, I say, you son of a—an unfortunate woman?—O, major, I'm undone! They are all that concern my estate, my jointure, my husband's deed of gift, my evidences for all my suits now depending! What will become of them?

Free. [*Aside.*] I'm glad to hear this.—[*Aloud.*] They'll be all safe, I warrant you, madam.

Wid. O where? where? Come, you villain, along with me, and show me where.

[*Exeunt* WIDOW, JERRY, *and* OLDFOX.

Man. Thou hast taken the right way to get a widow, by making her great boy rebel; for when nothing will make a widow marry, she'll do it to cross her children. But canst thou in earnest marry this harpy, this volume of shrivelled blurred parchments and law, this attorney's desk?

Free. Ay, ay; I'll marry and live honestly, that is, give my creditors, not her, due benevolence,—pay my debts.

Man. Thy creditors, you see, are not so barbarous as to put thee in prison; and wilt thou commit thyself to a noisome dungeon for thy life? which is the only satisfaction thou canst give thy creditors by this match.

Free. Why, is not she rich?

Man. Ay; but he that marries a widow for her money, will find himself as much mistaken as the widow that marries a young fellow for due benevolence, as you call it.

Free. Why, d'ye think I shan't deserve wages? I'll drudge faithfully.

Man. I tell thee again, he that is the slave in the mine has the least propriety in the ore. You may dig, and dig; but if thou wouldst have her money, rather get to be her trustee than her husband; for a true widow will make over her estate to anybody, and cheat herself rather than be cheated by her children or a second husband.

Re-enter JERRY, *running in a fright.*

Jer. O la, I'm undone! I'm undone! my mother will kill me:—you said you'd stand by one.

Free. So I will, my brave squire, I warrant thee.

Jer. Ay, but I dare not stay till she comes; for she's as furious, now she has lost her writings, as a bitch when she has lost her puppies.

Man. The comparison's handsome!

Jer. O, she's here!

Free. [*To the* Sailor.] Take him, Jack, and make haste with him to your master's lodging; and be sure you keep him up till I come.

[*Exeunt* JERRY *and* Sailor.

Re-enter Widow BLACKACRE *and* OLDFOX.

Wid. O my dear writings! Where's this heathen rogue, my minor?

Free. Gone to drown or hang himself.

Wid. No, I know him too well; he'll ne'er be felo de se that way: but he may go and choose a guardian of his own head, and so be felo de ses biens; for he has not yet chosen one.

Free. Say you so? And he shan't want one. [*Aside.*

Wid. But, now I think on't, 'tis you, sir, have put this cheat upon me; for there is a saying, *Take hold of a maid by her smock, and a widow by her writings, and they cannot get from you.* But I'll play fast and loose with you yet, if there be law, and my minor and writings are not forthcoming; I'll bring my action of detinue or trover. But first, I'll try to find out this guardianless, graceless villain.—Will you jog, major?

Man. If you have lost your evidence, I hope your causes cannot go on, and I may be gone?

Wid. O no; stay but a making-water while (as one may say) and I'll be with you again.

[*Exeunt* WIDOW *and* OLDFOX.

Free. Well; sure I am the first man that ever began a love-intrigue in Westminster-Hall.

Man. No, sure; for the love to a widow generally begins here: and as the widow's cause goes against the heir or executors, the jointure-rivals commence their suit to the widow.

Free. Well; but how, pray, have you passed your time here, since I was forced to leave you alone? You have had a great deal of patience.

Man. Is this a place to be alone, or have patience in? But I have had patience, indeed; for I have drawn upon me, since I came, but three quarrels and two lawsuits.

Free. Nay, faith, you are too curst to be let loose in the world: you should be tied up again in your sea-kennel, called a ship. But how could you quarrel here?

Man. How could I refrain? A lawyer talked peremptorily and saucily to me, and as good as gave me the lie.

Free. They do it so often to one another at the bar, that they make no bones on't elsewhere.

Man. However, I gave him a cuff on the ear; whereupon he jogs two men, whose backs were turned to us, (for they were reading at a bookseller's,) to witness I struck him, sitting the courts; which office they so readily promised, that I called 'em rascals and knights of the post. One of 'em presently calls two other absent witnesses, who were coming towards us at a distance; whilst the other, with a whisper, desires to know my name, that he might have satisfaction by way of challenge, as t'other by way of writ; but if it were not rather to direct his brother's writ, than his own challenge.—There, you see, is one of my quarrels, and two of my lawsuits.

Free. So!—and the other two?

Man. For advising a poet to leave off writing, and turn lawyer, because he is dull and impudent, and says or writes nothing now but by precedent.

Free. And the third quarrel?

Man. For giving more sincere advice to a handsome, well-dressed young fellow, (who asked it too,) not to marry a wench that he loved, and I had lain with.

Free. Nay, if you will be giving your sincere advice to lovers and poets, you will not fail of quarrels.

Man. Or if I stay in this place; for I see more quarrels crowding upon me. Let's be gone, and avoid 'em.

Enter NOVEL *at a distance, coming towards them.*

A plague on him, that sneer is ominous to us; he is coming upon us, and we shall not be rid of him.

Nov. Dear bully, don't look so grum upon me; you told me just now, you had forgiven me a little harmless raillery upon wooden legs last night.

Man. Yes, yes, pray begone, I am talking of business.

Nov. Can't I hear it? I love thee, and will be faithful, and always—

Man. Impertinent. 'Tis business that concerns Freeman only.

Nov. Well, I love Freeman too, and would not divulge his secret.—Prithee speak, prithee, I must—

Man. Prithee let me be rid of thee, I must be rid of thee.

Nov. Faith, thou canst hardly, I love thee so. Come, I must know the business.

Man. [*Aside.*] So, I have it now.—[*Aloud.*] Why, if you needs will know it, he has a quarrel, and his adversary bids him bring two friends with him: now, I am one, and we are thinking who we shall have for a third.

[*Several crossing the stage.*

Nov. A pox, there goes a fellow owes me a hundred pounds, and goes out of town to-morrow: I'll speak with him, and come to you presently.

[*Exit.*

Man. No, but you won't.

Free. You are dexterously rid of him.

Re-enter OLDFOX.

Man. To what purpose, since here comes another as impertinent? I know by his grin he is bound hither.

Old. Your servant, worthy, noble captain. Well, I have left the widow, because she carried me from your company: for, faith, captain, I must needs tell thee thou art the only officer in England, who was not an Edgehill officer, that I care for.

Man. I'm sorry for't.

Old. Why, wouldst thou have me love them?

Man. Anybody rather than me.

Old. What! you are modest, I see; therefore, too, I love thee.

Man. No, I am not modest; but love to brag myself, and can't patiently hear you fight over the last civil war. Therefore, go look out the fellow I saw just now here, that walks with his sword and stockings out at heels, and let him tell you the history of that scar on his cheek, to give you occasion to show yours got in the field at Bloomsbury, not that of Edgehill. Go to him, poor fellow; he is fasting, and has not yet the happiness this morning to stink of brandy and tobacco: go, give him some to hear you; I am busy.

Old. Well, egad, I love thee now, boy, for thy surliness. Thou art no tame captain, I see, that will suffer—

Man. An old fox.

Old. All that shan't make me angry: I consider that thou art peevish, and fretting at some ill success at law. Prithee, tell me what ill luck you have met with here.

Man. You.

Old. Do I look like the picture of ill luck? gadsnouns, I love thee more and more. And shall I tell thee what made me love thee first?

Man. Do; that I may be rid of that damned quality and thee.

Old. 'Twas thy wearing that broad sword there.

Man. Here, Freeman, let's change: I'll never wear it more.

Old. How! you won't, sure. Prithee, don't look like one of our holiday captains now-a-days, with a bodkin by your side, you martinet rogue.

Man. [*Aside.*] O, then, there's hopes.—[*Aloud.*] What, d'ye find fault with martinet? Let me tell you, sir, 'tis the best exercise in the world; the most ready, most easy, most graceful exercise that ever was used, and the most—

Old. Nay, nay, sir, no more; sir, your servant: if you praise martinet once, I have done with you, sir.—Martinet! martinet!— [*Exit.*

Free. Nay, you have made him leave you as willingly as ever he did an enemy; for he was truly for the king and parliament: for the parliament in their list; and for the king in cheating 'em of their pay, and never hurting the king's party in the field.

Enter a LAWYER *towards them.*

Man. A pox! this way:—here's a lawyer I know threatening us with another greeting.

Law. Sir, sir, your very servant; I was afraid you had forgotten me.

Man. I was not afraid you had forgotten me.

Law. No, sir; we lawyers have pretty good memories.

Man. You ought to have by your wits.

Law. O, you are a merry gentleman, sir: I remember you were merry when I was last in your company.

Man. I was never merry in thy company, Mr. Lawyer, sure.

Law. Why, I'm sure you joked upon me, and shammed me all night long.

Man. Shammed! prithee what barbarous law-term is that?

Law. Shamming! why, don't you know that? 'tis all our way of wit, sir.

Man. I am glad I do not know it then. Shamming! what does he mean by't, Freeman!

Free. Shamming is telling you an insipid dull lie with a dull face, which the sly wag the author only laughs at himself; and making himself believe 'tis a good jest, puts the sham only upon himself.

Man. So, your lawyer's jest, I find, like his practice, has more knavery than wit in't. I should make the worst shammer in England: I must always deal ingenuously, as I will with you, Mr. Lawyer, and advise you to be seen rather with attorneys and solicitors, than such fellows as I am: they will credit your practice more.

Law. No, sir, your company's an honour to me.

Man. No, faith; go this way, there goes an attorney; leave me for him; let it never be said a lawyer's civility did him hurt.

Law. No, worthy, honoured sir; I'll not leave you for any attorney, sure.

Man. Unless he had a fee in his hand.

Law. Have you any business here, sir? Try me: I'd serve you sooner than any attorney breathing.

Man. Business—[*Aside.*] So, I have thought of a sure way.—[*Aloud.*] Yes, faith, I have a little business.

Law. Have you so, sir? in what court, sir? what is't, sir? Tell me but how I may serve you, and I'll do't, sir, and take it for as great an honour—

Man. Faith, 'tis for a poor orphan of a sea officer of mine, that has no money. But if it could be followed in forma pauperis, and when the legacy's recovered—

Law. Forma pauperis, sir!

Man. Ay, sir. [*Several crossing the stage.*

Law. Mr. Bumblecase, Mr. Bumblecase! a word with you.—Sir, I beg your pardon at present; I have a little business—

Man. Which is not in forma pauperis.

[*Exit* Lawyer.

Free. So, you have now found a way to be rid of people without quarrelling?

Enter Alderman.

Man. But here's a city-rogue will stick as hard upon us, as if I owed him money.

Ald. Captain, noble sir, I am yours heartily, d'ye see; why should you avoid your old friends?

Man. And why should you follow me? I owe you nothing.

Ald. Out of my hearty respects to you: for there is not a man in England—

Man. Thou wouldst save from hanging with the expense of a shilling only.

Ald. Nay, nay, but, captain, you are like enough to tell me—

Man. Truth, which you won't care to hear; therefore you had better go talk with somebody else.

Ald. No, I know nobody can inform me better of some young wit, or spendthrift, that has a good dipped seat and estate in Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Essex, or Kent; any of these would serve my turn: now, if you knew of such a one, and would but help—

Man. You to finish his ruin.

Ald. I'faith, you should have a snip—

Man Of your nose, you thirty-in-the-hundred rascal; would you make me your squire setter, your bawd for manors? [*Takes him by the nose.*

Ald. Oh!

Free. Hold, or here will be your third law-suit.

Ald. Gads-precious, you hectoring person you, are you wild? I meant you no hurt, sir: I begin to think, as things go, land-security best, and have for a convenient mortgage, some ten, fifteen or twenty thousand pound by me.

Man. Then go lay it out upon an hospital, and take a mortgage of Heaven, according to your city custom; for you think by laying out a little money to hook in that too hereafter. Do, I say, and keep the poor you've made by taking forfeitures, that Heaven may not take yours.

Ald. No, to keep the cripples you make this war. This war spoils our trade.

Man. Damn your trade! 'tis the better for't.

Ald. What, will you speak against our trade?

Man. And dare you speak against the war, our trade?

Ald. [*Aside.*] Well, he may be a convoy of ships I am concerned in.—[*Aloud.*] Come, captain, I will have a fair correspondence with you, say what you will.

Man. Then prithee be gone.

Ald. No, faith; prithee, captain, let's go drink a dish of laced coffee, and talk of the times. Come, I'll treat you: nay, you shall go, for I have no business here.

Man. But I have.

Ald. To pick up a man to give thee a dinner. Come I'll do thy business for thee.

Man. Faith, now I think on't, so you may, as well as any man; for 'tis to pick up a man to be bound with me, to one who expects city security for—

Ald. Nay, then your servant, captain; business must be done.

Man. Ay, if it can. But hark you, alderman; without you—

Ald. Business, sir, I say, must be done; and there's an officer of the treasury [*Several crossing the stage*] I have an affair with— [*Exit.*

Man. You see now what the mighty friendship of the world is; what all ceremony, embraces, and plentiful professions come to! You are no more to believe a professing friend than a threatening enemy; and as no man hurts you, that tells you he'll do you a mischief, no man, you see, is your servant who says he is so. Why the devil, then, should a man be troubled with the flattery of knaves if he be not a fool or cully; or with the fondness of fools, if he be not a knave or cheat?

Free. Only for his pleasure: for there is some in laughing at fools, and disappointing knaves.

Man. That's a pleasure, I think, would cost you too dear, as well as marrying your widow to disappoint her. But, for my part, I have no pleasure by 'em but in despising 'em, wheresoe'er I meet 'em; and then the pleasure of hoping so to be rid of 'em. But now my comfort is, I am not worth a shilling in the world, which all the world shall know; and then I'm sure I shall have none of 'em come near me.

Free. A very pretty comfort, which I think you pay too dear for.—But is the twenty pound gone since the morning?

Man. To my boat's crew.—Would you have the poor, honest, brave fellows want?

Free. Rather than you or I.

Man. Why, art thou without money? thou who art a friend to everybody?

Free. I ventured my last stake upon the squire to nick him of his mother; and cannot help you to a dinner, unless you will go dine with my lord—

Man. No, no; the ordinary is too dear for me, where flattery must pay for my dinner: I am no herald or poet.

Free. We'll go then to the bishop's—

Man. There you must flatter the old philosophy: I cannot renounce my reason for a dinner.

Free. Why, then let's go to your alderman's.

Man. Hang him, rogue! that were not to dine; for he makes you drunk with lees of sack before dinner, to take away your stomach: and there you must call usury and extortion God's blessing, or the honest turning of the penny; hear him brag of the leather breeches in which he trotted first to town, and make a greater noise with his money in his parlour, than his cashiers do in his counting-house, without hopes of borrowing a shilling.

Free. Ay, a pox on't! 'tis like dining with the great gamesters; and when they fall to their com-

mon dessert, to see the heaps of gold drawn on all hands, without going to twelve. Let us go to my lady Goodly's.

Man. There to flatter her looks. You must mistake her grandchildren for her own; praise her cook, that she may rail at him; and feed her dogs, not yourself.

Free. What d'ye think of eating with your lawyer then?

Man. Eat with him! damn him! To hear him employ his barbarous eloquence in a reading upon the two-and-thirty good bits in a shoulder of veal, and be forced yourself to praise the cold bribe-pie that stinks, and drink law-French wine as rough and harsh as his law-French. A pox on him! I'd rather dine in the Temple-rounds or walks, with the knights without noses, or the knights of the post, who are honester fellows and better company. But let us home and try our fortune; for I'll stay no longer here for your damned widow.

Free. Well, let us go home then; for I must go for my damned widow, and look after my new damned charge. Three or four hundred years ago a man might have dined in this hall.

Man. But now the lawyer only here is fed;
And, bully-like, by quarrels gets his bread.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—MANLY'S *Lodging.*

Enter MANLY *and* FIDELIA.

Man. Well, there's success in thy face. Hast thou prevailed? say.

Fid. As I could wish sir.

Man. So; I told thee what thou wert fit for, and thou wouldst not believe me. Come, thank me for bringing thee acquainted with thy genius. Well, thou hast mollified her heart for me?

Fid. No, sir, not so; but what's better.

Man. How, what's better?

Fid. I shall harden your heart against her.

Man. Have a care, sir; my heart is too much in earnest to be fooled with, and my desire at height, and needs no delays to incite it. What, you are too good a pimp already, and know how to endear pleasure by withholding it? But leave off your page's bawdy-house tricks, sir, and tell me, will she be kind?

Fid. Kinder than you could wish, sir.

Man. So, then: well, prithee, what said she?

Fid. She said—

Man. What? thou'rt so tedious: speak comfort to me; what?

Fid. That of all things you are her aversion.

Man. How!

Fid. That she would sooner take a bedfellow out of an hospital, and diseases into her arms, than you.

Man. What?

Fid. That she would rather trust her honour with a dissolute debauched hector, nay worse, with a finical baffled coward, all over loathsome with affectation of the fine gentleman.

Man. What's all this you say?

Fid. Nay, that my offers of your love to her were more offensive, than when parents woo their virgin-daughters to the enjoyment of riches only; and that you were in all circumstances as nauseous to her as a husband on compulsion.

Man. Hold! I understand you not.

Fid. So, 'twill work, I see. [*Aside.*

Man. Did you not tell me—

Fid. She called you ten thousand ruffians.

Man. Hold, I say.

Fid. Brutes—

Man. Hold.

Fid. Sea-monsters—

Man. Damn your intelligence! Hear me a little now.

Fid. Nay, surly coward she called you too.

Man. Won't you hold yet? Hold, or—

Fid. Nay, sir, pardon me; I could not but tell you she had the baseness, the injustice, to call you coward, sir; coward, coward, sir.

Man. Not yet—

Fid. I've done:—coward, sir.

Man. Did not you say, she was kinder than I could wish her?

Fid. Yes, sir.

Man. How then?—O—I understand you now. At first she appeared in rage and disdain; the truest sign of a coming woman: but at last you prevailed, it seems; did you not?

Fid. Yes, sir.

Man. So then; let's know that only: come, prithee, without delays. I'll kiss thee for that news beforehand.

Fid. So; the kiss I'm sure is welcome to me, whatsoe'er the news will be to you. [*Aside.*

Man. Come, speak, my dear volunteer.

Fid. How welcome were that kind word too, if it were not for another woman's sake! [*Aside.*

Man. What, won't you speak? You prevailed for me at last, you say?

Fid. No, sir.

Man. No more of your fooling, sir; it will not agree with my impatience or temper.

Fid. Then not to fool you, sir, I spoke to her for you, but prevailed for myself; she would not hear me when I spoke in your behalf, but bid me say what I would in my own, though she gave me no occasion, she was so coming, and so was kinder, sir, than you could wish; which I was only afraid to let you know, without some warning.

Man. How's this? Young man, you are of a lying age; but I must hear you out, and if—

Fid. I would not abuse you, and cannot wrong her by any report of her, she is so wicked.

Man. How, wicked! had she the impudence, at the second sight of you only—

Fid. Impudence, sir! oh, she has impudence enough to put a court out of countenance, and debauch a stews.

Man. Why, what said she?

Fid. Her tongue, I confess, was silent; but her speaking eyes gloated such things, more immodest and lascivious than ravishers can act, or women under a confinement think.

Man. I know there are those whose eyes reflect more obscenity than the glasses in alcoves; but

there are others too who use a little art with their looks, to make 'em seem more beautiful, not more loving; which vain young fellows like you are apt to interpret in their own favour, and to the lady's wrong.

Fid. Seldom, sir. Pray, have you a care of gloating eyes; for he that loves to gaze upon 'em, will find at last a thousand fools and cuckolds in 'em instead of Cupids.

Man. Very well, sir.—But what, you had only eye-kindness from Olivia?

Fid. I tell you again, sir, no woman sticks there; eye-promises of love they only keep; nay, they are contracts which make you sure of 'em. In short, sir, she seeing me, with shame and amazement dumb, unactive, and resistless, threw her twisting arms about my neck, and smothered me with a thousand tasteless kisses. Believe me, sir, they were so to me.

Man. Why did you not avoid 'em then?

Fid. I fenced with her eager arms, as you did with the grapples of the enemy's fireship; and nothing but cutting 'em off could have freed me.

Man. Damned, damned woman, that could be so false and infamous! and damned, damned heart of mine, that cannot yet be false, though so infamous! what easy, tame suffering trampled things does that little god of talking cowards make of us! but—

Fid. So; it works, I find, as I expected. [*Aside.*

Man. But she was false to me before, she told me so herself, and yet I could not quite believe it; but she was, so that her second falseness is a favour to me, not an injury, in revenging me upon the man that wronged me first of her love. Her love! —a whore's, a witch's love!—But what, did she not kiss well, sir? I'm sure I thought her lips—but I must not think of 'em more—but yet they are such I could still kiss—grow to—and then tear off with my teeth, grind 'em into mammocks, and spit 'em into her cuckold's face.

Fid. Poor man, how uneasy he is! I have hardly the heart to give so much pain, though withal I give him a cure, and to myself new life. [*Aside.*

Man. But what, her kisses sure could not but warm you into desire at last, or a compliance with hers at least?

Fid. Nay, more, I confess—.

Man. What more? speak.

Fid. All you could fear had passed between us, if I could have been made to wrong you, sir, in that nature.

Man. Could have been made! you lie, you did.

Fid. Indeed, sir, 'twas impossible for me; besides, we were interrupted by a visit; but I confess, she would not let me stir, till I promised to return to her again within this hour, as soon as it should be dark; by which time she would dispose of her visit, and her servants, and herself, for my reception. Which I was fain to promise, to get from her.

Man. Ha!

Fid. But if ever I go near her again, may you, sir, think me as false to you, as she is; hate and renounce me, as you ought to do her, and, I hope, will do now.

Man. Well, but now I think on't, you shall keep your word with your lady. What, a young fellow, and fail the first, nay, so tempting, an assignation!

Fid. How, sir?

Man. I say, you shall go to her when 'tis dark, and shall not disappoint her.

Fid. I, sir! I should disappoint her more by going, for—

Man. How so?

Fid. Her impudence and injustice to you will make me disappoint her love, loathe her.

Man. Come, you have my leave; and if you disgust her, I'll go with you, and act love, whilst you shall talk it only.

Fid. You, sir! nay, then I'll never go near her. You act love, sir! You must but act it indeed, after all I have said to you. Think of your honour, sir: love!—

Man. Well, call it revenge, and that is honourable: I'll be revenged on her; and thou shalt be my second.

Fid. Not in a base action, sir, when you are your own enemy. O go not near her, sir; for Heaven's sake, for your own, think not of it!

Man. How concerned you are! I thought I should catch you. What, you are my rival at last, and are in love with her yourself; and have spoken ill of her out of your love to her, not me: and therefore would not have me go to her!

Fid. Heaven witness for me, 'tis because I love you only, I would not have you go to her.

Man. Come, come, the more I think on't, the more I'm satisfied you do love her. Those kisses, young man, I knew were irresistible; 'tis certain.

Fid. There is nothing certain in the world, sir, but my truth and your courage.

Man. Your servant, sir. Besides, false and ungrateful as she has been to me, and though I may believe her hatred to me great as you report it, yet I cannot think you are so soon and at that rate beloved by her, though you may endeavour it.

Fid. Nay, if that be all, and you doubt it still, sir, I will conduct you to her; and, unseen, your ears shall judge of her falseness, and my truth to you, if that will satisfy you.

Man. Yes, there is some satisfaction in being quite out of doubt; because 'tis that alone withholds us from the pleasure of revenge.

Fid. Revenge! What revenge can you have, sir? Disdain is best revenged by scorn; and faithless love, by loving another, and making her happy with the other's losings. Which, if I might advise—

Enter FREEMAN.

Man. Not a word more.

Free. What, are you talking of love yet, captain? I thought you had done with't.

Man. Why, what did you hear me say?

Free. Something imperfectly of love, I think.

Man. I was only wondering why fools, rascals, and desertless wretches, should still have the better of men of merit with all women, as much as with their own common mistress, Fortune.

Free. Because most women, like Fortune, are blind, seem to do all things in jest, and take pleasure in extravagant actions. Their love deserves neither thanks, or blame, for they cannot help it: 'tis all sympathy; therefore, the noisy, the finical, the talkative, the cowardly, and effeminate, have the better of the brave, the reasonable, and man of

honour; for they have no more reason in their love, or kindness, than Fortune herself.

Man. Yes, they have their reason. First, honour in a man they fear too much to love; and sense in a lover upbraids their want of it; and they hate anything that disturbs their admiration of themselves; but they are of that vain number, who had rather show their false generosity, in giving away profusely to worthless flatterers, than in paying just debts. And, in short, all women, like fortune (as you say) and rewards, are lost by too much meriting.

Fid. All women, sir! sure there are some who have no other quarrel to a lover's merit, but that it begets their despair of him.

Man. Thou art young enough to be credulous; but we—

Enter Sailor.

Sail. Here are now below, the scolding, daggled gentlewoman, and that Major Old—Old—Fop, I think you call him.

Free. Oldfox:—prithee bid 'em come up, with your leave, captain, for now I can talk with her upon the square, if I shall not disturb you.

[*Exit* Sailor.

Man. No; for I'll begone. Come, volunteer.

Free. Nay, pray stay; the scene between us will not be so tedious to you as you think. Besides, you shall see how I rigged my 'squire out, with the remains of my shipwrecked wardrobe; he is under your sea valet-de-chambre's hands, and by this time dressed, and will be worth your seeing. Stay, and I'll fetch my fool.

Man. No; you know I cannot easily laugh: besides, my volunteer and I have business abroad.

[*Exeunt* MANLY *and* FIDELIA *on one side;* FREEMAN *on the other.*

Enter Major OLDFOX *and* Widow BLACKACRE.

Wid. What, nobody here! did not the fellow say he was within?

Old. Yes, lady; and he may be perhaps a little busy at present; but if you think the time long till he comes, [*unfolding papers*] I'll read you here some of the fruits of my leisure, the overflowings of my fancy and pen.—[*Aside.*] To value me right, she must know my parts.—[*Aloud.*] Come—

Wid. No, no; I have reading work enough of my own in my bag, I thank you.

Old. Ay, law, madam; but here's a poem, in blank verse, which I think a handsome declaration of one's passion.

Wid. O, if you talk of declarations, I'll show you one of the prettiest penned things, which I mended too myself, you must know.

Old. Nay, lady, if you have used yourself so much to the reading harsh law, that you hate smooth poetry, here is a character for you, of—

Wid. A character! nay, then I'll show you my bill in chancery here, that gives you such a character of my adversary, makes him as black—

Old. Pshaw! away, away, lady! But if you think the character too long, here is an epigram, not above twenty lines, upon a cruel lady, who decreed her servant should hang himself, to demonstrate his passion.

Wid. Decreed! if you talk of decreeing, I have such a decree here, drawn by the finest clerk—

Old. O lady, lady, all interruption, and no sense between us, as if we were lawyers at the bar! but I had forgot, Apollo and Littleton never lodge in a head together. If you hate verses, I'll give you a cast of my politics in prose. 'Tis a Letter to a Friend in the Country; which is now the way of all such sober solid persons as myself, when they have a mind to publish their disgust to the times; though perhaps, between you and I, they have no friend in the country. And sure a politic, serious person may as well have a feigned friend in the country to write to, as an idle poet a feigned mistress to write to. And so here's my letter to a friend, or no friend, in the country, concerning the late conjuncture of affairs, in relation to coffee-houses; or, *The Coffee-man's Case.*

Wid. Nay, if your letter have a case in't, 'tis something; but first I'll read you a letter of mine to a friend in the country, called a letter of attorney.

Re-enter FREEMAN, *with* JERRY BLACKACRE *in an old gaudy suit and red breeches of* FREEMAN'S.

Old. What, interruption still! O the plague of interruption! worse to an author than the plague of critics. [*Aside.*

Wid. What's this I see? Jerry Blackacre, my minor, in red breeches! What, hast thou left the modest seemly garb of gown and cap for this? and have I lost all my good inns-of-chancery breeding upon thee then? and thou wilt go a breeding thyself from our inn of chancery and Westminster-hall, at coffee-houses, and ordinaries, playhouses, tennis-courts, and bawdy-houses?

Jer. Ay, ay, what then? perhaps I will; but what's that to you? Here's my guardian and tutor now, forsooth, that I am out of your huckster's hands.

Wid. How! thou hast not chosen him for thy guardian yet?

Jer. No, but he has chosen me for his charge, and that's all one; and I'll do anything he'll have me, and go all the world over with him; to ordinaries, and bawdy-houses, or anywhere else.

Wid. To ordinaries and bawdy-houses! have a care, minor, thou wilt enfeeble there thy estate and body: do not go to ordinaries and bawdy-houses, good Jerry.

Jer. Why, how come you to know any ill by bawdy-houses? you never had any hurt by 'em, had you, forsooth? Pray hold yourself contented; if I do go where money and wenches are to be had, you may thank yourself; for you used me so unnaturally, you would never let me have a penny to go abroad with; nor so much as come near the garret where your maidens lay; nay, you would not so much as let me play at hotcockles with 'em, nor have any recreation with 'em, though one should have kissed you behind, you were so unnatural a mother, so you were.

Free. Ay, a very unnatural mother, faith, squire.

Wid. But, Jerry, consider thou art yet but a minor; however, if thou wilt go home with me again, and be a good child, thou shalt see—

Free. Madam, I must have a better care of my heir under age, than so; I would sooner trust him alone with a stale waiting-woman and a parson, than with his widow-mother and her lover or lawyer.

Wid. Why, thou villain, part mother and minor! rob me of my child and my writings! but thou shalt find there's law; and as in the case of ravishment of guard—Westminster the Second.

Old. Young gentleman squire, pray be ruled by your mother and your friends.

Jer. Yes, I'll be ruled by my friends, therefore not by my mother, so I won't: I'll choose him for my guardian till I am of age; nay, maybe, for as long as I live.

Wid. Wilt thou so, thou wretch? and when thou'rt of age, thou wilt sign, seal and deliver too, wilt thou?

Jer. Yes, marry will I, if you go there too.

Wid. O do not squeeze wax, son; rather go to ordinaries and bawdy-houses, than squeeze wax. If thou dost that, farewell the goodly manor of Blackacre, with all its woods, underwoods, and appurtenances whatever! Oh, oh! [*Weeps.*

Free. Come, madam, in short, you see I am resolved to have a share in the estate, yours or your son's; if I cannot get you, I'll keep him, who is less coy, you find; but if you would have your son again, you must take me too. Peace or war? love, or law? You see my hostage is in my hand: I'm in possession.

Wid. Nay, if one of us must be ruined, e'en let it be him. By my body, a good one! Did you ever know yet a widow marry or not marry for the sake of her child? I'd have you to know, sir, I shall be hard enough for you both yet, without marrying you, if Jerry wont be ruled by me. What say you, booby, will you be ruled? speak.

Jer. Let one alone, can't you?

Wid. Wilt thou choose him for guardian, whom I refuse for husband?

Jer. Ay, to choose, I thank you.

Wid. And are all my hopes frustrated? Shall I never hear thee put cases again to John the butler, or our vicar? never see thee amble the circuit with the judges; and hear thee, in our town-hall, louder than the crier?

Jer. No; for I have taken my leave of lawyering and pettifogging.

Wid. Pettifogging! thou profane villain, hast thou so? Pettifogging!—then you shall take your leave of me, and your estate too; thou shalt be an alien to me and it for ever. Pettifogging!

Jer. O, but if you go there too, mother, we have the deeds and settlements, I thank you. Would you cheat me of my estate, i'fac?

Wid. No, no, I will not cheat your little brother Bob; for thou wert not born in wedlock.

Free. How's that?

Jer. How? what quirk has she got in her head now?

Wid. I say, thou canst not, shalt not inherit the Blackacres' estate.

Jer. Why? why, forsooth? What d'ye mean, if you go there too?

Wid. Thou art but my base child; and according to the law, canst not inherit it. Nay, thou art not so much as bastard eigne.

Jer. What, what, am I then the son of a whore, mother?

Wid. The law says—

Free. Madam, we know what the law says; but have a care what you say. Do not let your passion, to ruin your son, ruin your reputation.

Wid. Hang reputation, sir! am not I a widow? have no husband, nor intend to have any? Nor would you, I suppose, now have me for a wife. So I think now I'm revenged on my son and you, without marrying, as I told you.

Free. But consider, madam.

Jer. What, have you no shame left in you, mother?

Wid. Wonder not at it, major. 'Tis often the poor pressed widow's case, to give up her honour to save her jointure; and seem to be a light woman, rather than marry: as some young men, they say, pretend to have the filthy disease, and lose their credit with most women, to avoid the importunities of some. [*Aside to* OLDFOX.

Free. But one word with you, madam.

Wid. No, no, sir. Come, major, let us make haste now to the Prerogative Court.

Old. But, lady, if what you say be true, will you stigmatise your reputation on record? and if it be not true, how will you prove it?

Wid. Pshaw! I can prove anything: and for my reputation, know, major, a wise woman will no more value her reputation, in disinheriting a rebellious son of a good estate, than she would in getting him, to inherit an estate.

[*Exeunt* Widow *and* OLDFOX.

Free. Madam—We must not let her go so, squire.

Jer. Nay, the devil can't stop her though, if she has a mind to't. But come, bully-guardian, we'll go and advise with three attorneys, two proctors, two solicitors, and a shrewd man of Whitefriars, neither attorney, proctor, or solicitor, but as pure a pimp to the law as any of 'em: and sure all they will be hard enough for her, for I fear, bully-guardian, you are too good a joker to have any law in your head.

Free. Thou'rt in the right on't, squire, I understand no law; especially that against bastards, since I'm sure the custom is against that law, and more people get estates by being so, than lose 'em.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—OLIVIA's *Lodging.*

Enter Lord PLAUSIBLE, *and* Boy *with a Candle.*

Plaus. Little gentleman, your most obedient, faithful, humble servant. Where, I beseech you, is that divine person, your noble lady?

Boy. Gone out, my lord; but commanded me to give you this letter. [*Gives him a letter.*

Enter NOVEL.

Plaus. Which he must not observe.

[*Aside. Puts it up.*

Nov. Hey, boy, where is thy lady?

Boy. Gone out, sir; but I must beg a word with you. [*Gives him a letter, and exit.*

Nov. For me? So.—[*Puts up the Letter.*] Servant, servant, my lord; you see the lady knew of your coming, for she is gone out.

Plaus. Sir, I humbly beseech you not to censure the lady's good breeding: she has reason to use more liberty with me than with any other man.

Nov. How, viscount, how?

Plaus. Nay, I humbly beseech you, be not in choler; where there is most love, there may be most freedom.

Nov. Nay, then 'tis time to come to an eclair-

cissement with you, and to tell you, you must think no more of this lady's love.

Plaus. Why, under correction, dear sir?

Nov. There are reasons, reasons, viscount.

Plaus. What, I beseech you, noble sir?

Nov. Prithee, prithee, be not impertinent, my lord; some of you lords are such conceited, well-assured, impertinent rogues.

Plaus. And you noble wits are so full of shamming and drolling, one knows not where to have you seriously.

Nov. Well, you shall find me in bed with this lady one of these days.

Plaus. Nay, I beseech you, spare the lady's honour; for hers and mine will be all one shortly.

Nov. Prithee, my lord, be not an ass. Dost thou think to get her from me? I have had such encouragements—

Plaus. I have not been thought unworthy of 'em.

Nov. What, not like mine! Come to an eclaircissement, as I said.

Plaus. Why, seriously then, she has told me viscountess sounded prettily.

Nov. And me, that Novel was a name she would sooner change hers for than for any title in England.

Plaus. She has commended the softness and respectfulness of my behaviour.

Nov. She has praised the briskness of my raillery, of all things, man.

Plaus. The sleepiness of my eyes she liked.

Nov. Sleepiness! dulness, dulness. But the fierceness of mine she adored.

Plaus. The brightness of my hair she liked.

Nov. The brightness! no, the greasiness, I warrant. But the blackness and lustre of mine she admires.

Plaus. The gentleness of my smile.

Nov. The subtilty of my leer.

Plaus. The clearness of my complexion.

Nov. The redness of my lips.

Plaus. The whiteness of my teeth.

Nov. My janty way of picking them.

Plaus. The sweetness of my breath.

Nov. Ha! ha! nay, then she abused you, 'tis plain; for you know what Manly said:—the sweetness of your pulvillio she might mean; but for your breath! ha! ha! ha! Your breath is such, man, that nothing but tobacco can perfume; and your complexion nothing could mend but the small-pox.

Plaus. Well, sir, you may please to be merry; but, to put you out of all doubt, sir, she has received some jewels from me of value.

Nov. And presents from me; besides what I presented her jantily, by way of ombre, of three or four hundred pounds value, which I'm sure are the earnest-pence for our love-bargain.

Plaus. Nay, then, sir, with your favour, and to make an end of all your hopes, look you there, sir, she has writ to me—

Nov. How! how! well, well, and so she has to me; look you there—

[*Deliver to each other their letters.*

Plaus. What's here?

Nov. How's this?

[*Reads out.*]—*My dear Lord,—You'll excuse me for breaking my word with you, since 'twas to oblige, not offend you; for I am only gone abroad but to disappoint Novel, and meet you in the drawing-room; where I expect you with as much impatience as when I used to suffer Novel's visits—the most impertinent fop that ever affected the name of a wit, therefore not capable, I hope, to give you jealousy; for, for your sake alone, you saw I renounced an old lover, and will do all the world. Burn the letter, but lay up the kindness of it in your heart, with your*—Olivia.

Very fine! but pray let's see mine.

Plaus. I understand it not; but sure she cannot think so of me.

Nov. [*Reads the other letter.*] Hum! ha!—*meet—for your sake*—hum—*quitted an old lover—world—burn—in your heart—with your*—Olivia.

Just the same, the names only altered.

Plaus. Surely there must be some mistake, or somebody has abused her and us.

Nov. Yes, you are abused, no doubt on't, my lord; but I'll to Whitehall, and see.

Plaus. And I, where I shall find you are abused.

Nov. Where, if it be so, for our comfort, we cannot fail of meeting with fellow-sufferers enough; for, as Freeman said of another, she stands in the drawing-room, like the glass, ready for all comers, to set their gallantry by her: and, like the glass too, lets no man go from her unsatisfied with himself. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Olivia *and* Boy.

Oliv. Both here, and just gone?

Boy. Yes, madam.

Oliv. But are you sure neither saw you deliver the other a letter?

Boy. Yes, yes, madam, I am very sure.

Oliv. Go then to the Old Exchange, to Westminster, Holborn, and all the other places I told you of; I shall not need you these two hours: begone, and take the candle with you, and be sure you leave word again below, I am gone out, to all that ask.

Boy. Yes, madam. [*Exit.*

Oliv. And my new lover will not ask, I'm sure; he has his lesson, and cannot miss me here, though in the dark: which I have purposely designed, as a remedy against my blushing gallant's modesty; for young lovers, like game-cocks, are made bolder by being kept without light.

Enter Vernish, *as from a journey.*

Ver. Where is she? Darkness everywhere? [*Softly.*

Oliv. What! come before your time? My soul! my life! your haste has augmented your kindness; and let me thank you for it thus, and thus.—[*Embracing and kissing him.*] And though, my soul, the little time since you left me has seemed an age to my impatience, sure it is yet but seven—

Ver. How! who's that you expected after seven?

Oliv. Ha! my husband returned! and have I been throwing away so many kind kisses on my husband, and wronged my lover already? [*Aside.*

Ver. Speak, I say, who was't you expected after seven?

Oliv. [*Aside.*] What shall I say?—oh—[*Aloud.*] Why 'tis but seven days, is it, dearest, since you went out of town? and I expected you not so soon.

Ver. No, sure, 'tis but five days since I left you.

Oliv. Pardon my impatience, dearest, I thought 'em seven at least.

Ver. Nay, then—

Oliv. But, my life, you shall never stay half so long from me again; you shan't indeed, by this kiss you shan't.

Ver. No, no; but why alone in the dark?

Oliv. Blame not my melancholy in your absence. —But, my soul, since you went, I have strange news to tell you: Manly is returned.

Ver. Manly returned! Fortune forbid!

Oliv. Met with the Dutch in the channel, fought, sunk his ship, and all he carried with him. He was here with me yesterday.

Ver. And did you own our marriage to him?

Oliv. I told him I was married to put an end to his love and my trouble; but to whom, is yet a secret kept from him and all the world. And I have used him so scurvily, his great spirit will ne'er return to reason it farther with me: I have sent him to sea again, I warrant.

Ver. 'Twas bravely done. And sure he will now hate the shore more than ever, after so great a disappointment. Be you sure only to keep a while our great secret, till he be gone. In the mean time, I'll lead the easy, honest fool by the nose, as I used to do; and whilst he stays, rail with him at thee; and when he's gone, laugh with thee at him. But have you his cabinet of jewels safe? part not with a seed-pearl to him, to keep him from starving.

Oliv. Nor from hanging.

Ver. He cannot recover 'em; and, I think, will scorn to beg 'em again.

Oliv. But, my life, have you taken the thousand guineas he left in my name out of the goldsmith's hands?

Ver. Ay, ay; they are removed to another goldsmith's.

Oliv. Ay, but, my soul, you had best have a care he find not where the money is; for his present wants, as I'm informed, are such as will make him inquisitive enough.

Ver. You say true, and he knows the man too; but I'll remove it to-morrow.

Oliv. To-morrow! O do not stay till to-morrow; go to-night, immediately.

Ver. Now I think on't, you advise well, and I will go presently.

Oliv. Presently! instantly! I will not let you stay a jot.

Ver. I will then, though I return not home till twelve.

Oliv. Nay, though not till morning, with all my heart. Go, dearest; I am impatient till you are gone.—[*Thrusts him out.*] So, I have at once now brought about those two grateful businesses, which all prudent women do together, secured money and pleasure; and now all interruptions of the last are removed. Go, husband, and come up, friend: just the buckets in the well; the absence of one brings the other. But I hope, like them too, they will not meet in the way, jostle, and clash together.

Enter FIDELIA, *and* MANLY *treading softly and staying behind at some distance.*

So, are you come? (but not the husband-bucket, I hope, again.)—Who's there? my dearest? [*Softly.*

Fid. My life—

Oliv. Right, right.—Where are thy lips? Here, take the dumb and best welcomes, kisses and embraces; 'tis not a time for idle words. In a duel of love, as in others, parleying shows basely. Come, we are alone; and now the word is only satisfaction, and defend not thyself.

Man. How's this? Why, she makes love like a devil in a play; and in this darkness, which conceals her angel's face, if I were apt to be afraid, I should think her a devil. [*Aside.*

Oliv. What, you traverse ground, young gentleman! [FIDELIA *avoiding her.*

Fid. I take breath only.

Man. Good heavens! how was I deceived! [*Aside.*

Oliv. Nay, you are a coward; what, are you afraid of the fierceness of my love?

Fid. Yes, madam, lest its violence might presage its change; and I must needs be afraid you would leave me quickly, who could desert so brave a gentleman as Manly.

Oliv. O, name not his name! for in a time of stolen joys, as this is, the filthy name of husband were not a more allaying sound.

Man. There's some comfort yet. [*Aside.*

Fid. But did you not love him?

Oliv. Never. How could you think it?

Fid. Because he thought it; who is a man of that sense, nice discerning, and diffidency, that I should think it hard to deceive him.

Oliv. No; he that distrusts most the world, trusts most to himself, and is but the more easily deceived, because he thinks he can't be deceived. His cunning is like the coward's sword, by which he is oftener worsted than defended.

Fid. Yet, sure, you used no common art to deceive him.

Oliv. I knew he loved his own singular moroseness so well, as to dote upon any copy of it; wherefore I feigned a hatred to the world too, that he might love me in earnest: but, if it had been hard to deceive him, I'm sure 'twere much harder to love him. A dogged, ill-mannered—

Fid. D'ye hear, sir? pray, hear her. [*Aside to* MANLY.

Oliv. Surly, untractable, snarling brute! He! a mastiff dog were as fit a thing to make a gallant of.

Man. Ay, a goat, or monkey, were fitter for thee. [*Aside.*

Fid. I must confess, for my part, though my rival, I cannot but say he has a manly handsomeness in's face and mien.

Oliv. So has a Saracen in the sign.

Fid. Is proper, and well made.

Oliv. As a drayman.

Fid. Has wit.

Oliv. He rails at all mankind.

Fid. And undoubted courage.

Oliv. Like the hangman's; can murder a man when his hands are tied. He has cruelty indeed; which is no more courage, than his railing is wit.

Man. Thus women, and men like women, are too hard for us, when they think we do not hear 'em: and reputation, like other mistresses, is never true to a man in his absence. [*Aside.*

Fid. He is—

Oliv. Prithee, no more of him: I thought I had satisfied you enough before, that he could never be a rival for you to apprehend. And you need not

be more assured of my aversion to him, than by the last testimony of my love to you; which I am ready to give you. Come, my soul, this way.

[*Pulls* FIDELIA.

Fid. But, madam, what could make you dissemble love to him, when 'twas so hard a thing for you; and flatter his love to you?

Oliv. That which makes all the world flatter and dissemble, 'twas his money: I had a real passion for that. Yet I loved not that so well, as for it to take him; for as soon as I had his money I hastened his departure like a wife, who when she has made the most of a dying husband's breath, pulls away his pillow.

Man. Damned money! its master's potent rival still; and like a saucy pimp, corrupts itself the mistress it procures for us. [*Aside.*

Oliv. But I did not think with you, my life, to pass my time in talking. Come hither, come; yet stay, till I have locked a door in the other room, that may chance to let us in some interruption; which reciting poets or losing gamesters fear not more than I at this time do. [*Exit.*

Fid. Well, I hope you are now satisfied, sir, and will be gone to think of your revenge?

Man. No, I am not satisfied, and must stay to be revenged.

Fid. How, sir? You'll use no violence to her, I hope, and forfeit your own life, to take away hers? that were no revenge.

Man. No, no, you need not fear: my revenge shall only be upon her honour, not her life.

Fid. How, sir? her honour? O heavens! consider, sir, she has no honour. D'ye call that revenge? can you think of such a thing? But reflect, sir, how she hates and loathes you.

Man. Yes, so much she hates me, that it would be a revenge sufficient to make her accessary to my pleasure, and then let her know it.

Fid. No, sir, no; to be revenged on her now, were to disappoint her. Pray, sir, let us begone.

[*Pulls* MANLY.

Man. Hold off! What, you are my rival then! and therefore you shall stay, and keep the door for me, whilst I go in for you; but when I'm gone, if you dare to stir off from this very board, or breathe the least murmuring accent, I'll cut her throat first; and if you love her, you will not venture her life.—Nay, then I'll cut your throat too; and I know you love your own life at least.

Fid. But, sir; good sir.

Man. Not a word more, lest I begin my revenge on her by killing you.

Fid. But are you sure 'tis revenge that makes you do this? how can it be?

Man. Whist!

Fid. 'Tis a strange revenge, indeed.

Man. If you make me stay, I shall keep my word, and begin with you. No more.

[*Exit at the same door* OLIVIA *went out by.*

Fid. O heavens! is there not punishment enough
In loving well, if you will have't a crime,
But you must add fresh torments daily to't,
And punish us like peevish rivals still,
Because we fain would find a heaven here?
But did there never any love like me,
That untried tortures you must find me out?
Others at worst, you force to kill themselves;
But I must be self-murderess of my love,
Yet will not grant me power to end my life,
My cruel life; for when a lover's hopes
Are dead and gone, life is unmerciful.

[*Sits down and weeps.*

Re-enter MANLY.

Man. I have thought better on't: I must not discover myself now I am without witnesses; for if I barely should publish it, she would deny it with as much impudence, as she would act it again with this young fellow here.—Where are you?

Fid. Here—oh—now I suppose we may be gone.

Man. I will; but not you. You must stay and act the second part of a lover, that is, talk kindness to her.

Fid. Not I, sir.

Man. No disputing, sir, you must; tis necessary to my design of coming again to-morrow night.

Fid. What, can you come again then hither?

Man. Yes; and you must make the appointment, and an apology for your leaving her so soon; for I have said not a word to her; but have kept your counsel, as I expect you should do mine. Do this faithfully, and I promise you here, you shall run my fortune still, and we will never part as long as we live; but if you do not do it, expect not to live.

Fid. 'Tis hard, sir; but such a consideration will make it easier. You won't forget your promise, sir?

Man. No, by heavens. But I hear her coming.

[*Exit.*

Re-enter OLIVIA.

Oliv. Where is my life? Run from me already! You do not love me, dearest; nay, you are angry with me, for you would not so much as speak a kind word to me within: what was the reason?

Fid. I was transported too much.

Oliv. That's kind.—But come, my soul, what make you here? Let us go in again; we may be surprised in this room, 'tis so near the stairs.

Fid. No, we shall hear the better here, if anybody should come up.

Oliv. Nay, I assure you, we shall be secure enough within: come, come—

Fid. I am sick, and troubled with a sudden dizziness; and cannot stir yet.

Oliv. Come, I have spirits within.

Fid. O! don't you hear a noise, madam?

Oliv. No, no; there is none: come, come.

[*Pulls her.*

Fid. Indeed there is; and I love you so much, I must have a care of your honour, if you won't, and go; but to come to you to-morrow night, if you please.

Oliv. With all my soul. But you must not go yet; come, prithee.

Fid. Oh!—I'm now sicker, and am afraid of one of my fits.

Oliv. What fits?

Fid. Of the falling sickness; and I lie generally an hour in a trance: therefore pray consider your honour for the sake of my love, and let me go, that I may return to you often.

Oliv. But will you be sure then to come to-morrow night?

Fid. Yes.

Oliv. Swear.

Fid. By our past kindness!

Oliv. Well, go your ways then, if you will, you

naughty creature you.—[*Exit* FIDELIA.] These young lovers, with their fears and modesty, make themselves as bad as old ones to us; and I apprehend their bashfulness more than their tattling.

Re-enter FIDELIA.

Fid. O madam, we're undone! There was a gentleman upon the stairs, coming up with a candle, which made me retire. Look you, here he comes!

Re-enter VERNISH, *and his* Servant *with a light.*

Oliv. How, my husband! Oh, undone indeed! This way. [*Exit.*

Ver. Ha! You shall not escape me so, sir. [*Stops* FIDELIA.

Fid. O heavens! more fears, plagues, and torments yet in store! [*Aside.*

Ver. Come, sir, I guess what your business was here, but this must be your business now. Draw. [*Draws.*

Fid. Sir—

Ver. No expostulations; I shall not care to hear of't. Draw.

Fid. Good sir!

Ver. How, you rascal! not courage to draw; yet durst do me the greatest injury in the world? Thy cowardice shall not save thy life. [*Offers to run at* FIDELIA.

Fid. O hold, sir, and send but your servant down, and I'll satisfy you, sir, I could not injure you as you imagine.

Ver. Leave the light and begone.—[*Exit* Servant.] Now, quickly, sir, what have you to say, or—

Fid. I am a woman, sir, a very unfortunate woman.

Ver. How! a very handsome woman, I'm sure then: here are witnesses of't too, I confess— [*Pulls off her peruke and feels her breasts.* [*Aside.*] Well, I'm glad to find the tables turned; my wife is in more danger of cuckolding than I was.

Fid. Now, sir, I hope you are so much a man of honour, as to let me go, now I have satisfied you, sir.

Ver. When you have satisfied me, madam, I will.

Fid. I hope, sir, you are too much a gentleman to urge those secrets from a woman which concern her honour. You may guess my misfortune to be love by my disguise: but a pair of breeches could not wrong you, sir.

Ver. I may believe love has changed your outside, which could not wrong me; but why did my wife run away?

Fid. I know not, sir; perhaps because she would not be forced to discover me to you, or to guide me from your suspicions, that you might not discover me yourself; which ungentlemanlike curiosity I hope you will cease to have, and let me go.

Ver. Well, madam, if I must not know who you are, 'twill suffice for me only to know certainly what you are; which you must not deny me. Come, there is a bed within, the proper rack for lovers; and if you are a woman, there you can keep no secrets; you'll tell me there all unasked. Come. [*Pulls her.*

Fid. Oh! what d'ye mean? Help! oh!

Ver. I'll show you: but 'tis in vain to cry out: no one dares help you; for I am lord here.

Fid. Tyrant here!—But if you are master of this house, which I have taken for a sanctuary, do not violate it yourself.

Ver. No, I'll preserve you here, and nothing shall hurt you, and will be as true to you as your disguise; but you must trust me then. Come, come. [*Pulls her.*

Fid. Oh! oh! rather than you should drag me to a death so horrid and so shameful, I'll die here a thousand deaths.—But you do not look like a ravisher, sir.

Ver. Nor you like one would put me to't; but if you will—

Fid. Oh! oh! help! help!

Re-enter Servant.

Ver. You saucy rascal, how durst you come in? When you heard a woman squeak, that should have been your cue to shut the door.

Serv. I come, sir, to let you know, the alderman coming home immediately after you were at his house, has sent his cashier with the money, according to your note.

Ver. Damn his money! Money never came to any, sure, unseasonably till now. Bid him stay.

Serv. He says, he cannot a moment.

Ver. Receive it you then.

Serv. He says he must have your receipt for it:—he is in haste, for I hear him coming up, sir.

Ver. Damn him! Help me in here then with this dishonourer of my family.

Fid. Oh! oh!

Serv. You say she is a woman, sir.

Ver. No matter, sir: must you prate?

Fid. Oh heavens! is there— [*They thrust her in, and lock the door.*

Ver. Stay there, my prisoner; you have a short reprieve.
I'll fetch the gold, and that she can't resist,
For with a full hand 'tis we ravish best. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—ELIZA's *Lodgings.*

Enter OLIVIA *and* ELIZA.

Oliv. Ah, cousin! nothing troubles me but that I have given the malicious world its revenge, and reason now to talk as freely of me as I used to do of it.

Eliza. Faith, then, let not that trouble you; for, to be plain, cousin, the world cannot talk worse of you than it did before.

Oliv. How, cousin! I'd have you to know, before this faux pas, this trip of mine, the world could not talk of me.

Eliza. Only that you mind other people's actions so much that you take no care of your own, but to hide 'em; that, like a thief, because you know

yourself most guilty, you impeach your fellow-criminals first, to clear yourself.

Oliv. O wicked world!

Eliza. That you pretend an aversion to all mankind in public, only that their wives and mistresses may not be jealous, and hinder you of their conversation in private.

Oliv. Base world!

Eliza. That abroad you fasten quarrels upon innocent men for talking of you, only to bring 'em to ask your pardon at home, and to become dear friends with them, who were hardly your acquaintance before.

Oliv. Abominable world!

Eliza. That you condemn the obscenity of modern plays, only that you may not be censured for never missing the most obscene of the old ones.

Oliv. Damned world!

Eliza. That you deface the nudities of pictures, and little statues, only because they are not real.

Oliv. O, fy! fy! fy! hideous, hideous! Cousin, the obscenity of their censures makes me blush!

Eliza. The truth of 'em, the naughty world would say now.

Enter Lettice *hastily.*

Let. O, madam! here is that gentleman coming up who now you say is my master.

Oliv. O, cousin! whither shall I run? protect me, or—

[Olivia *runs away, and stands at a distance.*

Enter Vernish.

Ver. Nay, nay, come—

Oliv. O, sir, forgive me!

Ver. Yes, yes, I can forgive you being alone in the dark with a woman in man's clothes: but have a care of a man in women's clothes.

Oliv. What does he mean? he dissembles only to get me into his power: or has my dear friend made him believe he was a woman? My husband may be deceived by him, but I'm sure I was not. [*Aside.*

Ver. Come, come, you need not have lain out of your house for this; but perhaps you were afraid, when I was warm with suspicions, you must have discovered who she was.—And, prithee, may I not know it?

Oliv. She was!—[*Aside*] I hope he has been deceived: and since my lover has played the card, I must not renounce.

Ver. Come, what's the matter with thee? If I must not know who she is, I'm satisfied without. Come hither.

Oliv. Sure you do know her; she has told you herself, I suppose.

Ver. No, I might have known her better but that I was interrupted by the goldsmith, you know, and was forced to lock her into your chamber, to keep her from his sight; but, when I returned, I found she was got away by tying the window-curtains to the balcony, by which she slid down into the street. For, you must know, I jested with her, and made her believe I'd ravish her; which she apprehended, it seems, in earnest.

Oliv. Then she got from you?

Ver. Yes.

Oliv. And is quite gone?

Ver. Yes.

Oliv. I'm glad on't—otherwise you had ravished her, sir? But how durst you go so far, as to make her believe you would ravish her? let me understand that, sir. What! there's guilt in your face, you blush too: nay, then you did ravish her, you did, you base fellow! What, ravish a woman in the first month of our marriage! 'tis a double injury to me, thou base, ungrateful man! wrong my bed already, villain! I could tear out those false eyes, barbarous, unworthy wretch!

Eliza. So, so!—

Ver. Prithee hear, my dear.

Oliv. I will never hear you, my plague, my torment!

Ver. I swear—prithee, hear me.

Oliv. I have heard already too many of your false oaths and vows, especially your last in the church. O wicked man! and wretched woman that I was! I wish I had then sunk down into a grave, rather than to have given you my hand, to be led to your loathsome bed. Oh—oh— [*Pretends to weep.*

Ver. So, very fine! just a marriage-quarrel! which though it generally begins by the wife's fault, yet, in the conclusion, it becomes the husband's; and whosoever offends at first, he only is sure to ask pardon at last. My dear—

Oliv. My devil!—

Ver. Come, prithee be appeased, and go home; I have bespoken our supper betimes: for I could not eat till I found you. Go, I'll give you all kind of satisfactions; and one, which uses to be a reconciling one, two hundred of those guineas I received last night, to do what you will with.

Oliv. What, would you pay me for being your bawd?

Ver. Nay, prithee no more; go, and I'll thoroughly satisfy you when I come home; and then, too, we will have a fit of laughter at Manly, whom I am going to find at the Cock in Bow-street, where I hear he dined. Go, dearest, go home.

Eliza. A very pretty turn, indeed, this! [*Aside.*

Ver. Now, cousin, since by my wife I have that honour and privilege of calling you so, I have something to beg of you too; which is not to take notice of our marriage to any whatever yet a while, for some reasons very important to me. And, next, that you will do my wife the honour to go home with her; and me the favour, to use that power you have with her, in our reconcilement.

Eliza. That I dare promise, sir, will be no hard matter. Your servant.—[*Exit* Vernish.]—Well, cousin, this, I confess, was reasonable hypocrisy; you were the better for't.

Oliv. What hypocrisy?

Eliza. Why, this last deceit of your husband was lawful, since in your own defence.

Oliv. What deceit? I'd have you to know I never deceived my husband.

Eliza. You do not understand me, sure; I say, this was an honest come-off, and a good one. But 'twas a sign your gallant had had enough of your conversation, since he could so dexterously cheat your husband in passing for a woman.

Oliv. What d'ye mean, once more, with my gallant, and passing for a woman?

Eliza. What do you mean? you see your husband took him for a woman.

Oliv. Whom?

Eliza. Heyday! why, the man he found you with,

for whom last night you were so much afraid; and who you told me—

Oliv. Lord, you rave sure!

Eliza. Why, did not you tell me last night—

Oliv. I know not what I might tell you last night, in a fright. .

Eliza. Ay, what was that fright for? for a woman? besides, were you not afraid to see your husband just now? I warrant only for having been found with a woman! Nay, did you not just now, too, own your false step, or trip, as you called it? which was with a woman too! fy, this fooling is so insipid, 'tis offensive!

Oliv. And fooling with my honour will be more offensive. Did you not hear my husband say he found me with a woman in man's clothes? and d'ye think he does not know a man from a woman?

Eliza. Not so well, I'm sure, as you do; therefore I'd rather take your word.

Oliv. What, you grow scurrilous, and are, I find, more censorious than the world! I must have a care of you, I see.

Eliza. No, you need not fear yet, I'll keep your secret.

Oliv. My secret! I'd have you to know, I have no need of confidants, though you value yourself upon being a good one.

Eliza. O admirable confidence! you show more in denying your wickedness, than other people in glorying in't.

Oliv. Confidence, to me! to me such language! nay, then I'll never see your face again.—[*Aside.*] I'll quarrel with her, that people may never believe I was in her power; but take for malice all the truth she may speak against me.—[*Aloud.*] Lettice, where are you? Let us be gone from this censorious ill woman.

Eliza. [*Aside.*] Nay, thou shalt stay a little, to damn thyself quite.—[*Aloud.*] One word first, pray, madam; can you swear that whom your husband found you with—

Oliv. Swear! ay, that whosoever 'twas that stole up, unknown, into my room, when 'twas dark, I know not, whether man or woman, by heavens, by all that's good; or, may I never more have joys here, or in the other world! Nay, may I eternally—

Eliza. Be damned. So, so, you are damned enough already by your oaths; and I enough confirmed, and now you may please to be gone. Yet take this advice with you, in this plain-dealing age, to leave off forswearing yourself; for when people hardly think the better of a woman for her real modesty, why should you put that great constraint upon yourself to feign it?

Oliv. O hideous, hideous advice! let us go out of the hearing of it. She will spoil us, Lettice.

[*Exeunt* OLIVIA *and* LETTICE *at one door,* ELIZA *at the other.*

SCENE II.—*The Cock in Bow-street.—A Table and Bottles.*

Enter MANLY *and* FIDELIA.

Man. How! saved her honour by making her husband believe you were a woman! 'Twas well, but hard enough to do, sure.

Fid. We were interrupted before he could contradict me.

Man. But can't you tell me, d'ye say, what kind of man he was?

Fid. I was so frightened, I confess, I can give no other account of him, but that he was pretty tall, round-faced, and one, I'm sure, I ne'er had seen before.

Man. But she, you say, made you swear to return to-night?

Fid. But I have since sworn, never to go near her again; for the husband would murder me, or worse, if he caught me again.

Man. No, I will go with you, and defend you to-night, and then I'll swear, too, never to go near her again.

Fid. Nay, indeed, sir, I will not go, to be accessary to your death too. Besides, what should you go again, sir, for?

Man. No disputing, or advice, sir, you have reason to know I am unalterable. Go therefore presently, and write her a note, to inquire if her assignation with you holds; and if not to be at her own house, where else; and be importunate to gain admittance to her to-night. Let your messenger, ere he deliver your letter, inquire first if her husband be gone out. Go, 'tis now almost six of the clock; I expect you back here before seven, with leave to see her then. Go, do this dextrously, and expect the performance of my last night's promise, never to part with you.

Fid. Ay, sir; but will you be sure to remember that?

Man. Did I ever break my word? Go, no more replies, or doubts. [*Exit* FIDELIA.

Enter FREEMAN.

Where hast thou been?

Free. In the next room with my lord Plausible and Novel.

Man. Ay, we came hither, because 'twas a private house; but with thee indeed no house can be private, for thou hast that pretty quality of the familiar fops of the town, who, in an eating-house, always keep company with all people in't but those they came with.

Free. I went into their room, but to keep them, and my own fool the squire, out of your room; but you shall be peevish now, because you have no money. But why the devil won't you write to those we were speaking of? Since your modesty, or your spirit, will not suffer you to speak to 'em, to lend you money, why won't you try 'em at last that way?

Man. Because I know 'em already, and can bear want better than denials, nay, than obligations.

Free. Deny you! they cannot. All of 'em have been your intimate friends.

Man. No, they have been people only I have obliged particularly.

Free. Very well; therefore you ought to go to 'em the rather, sure.

Man. No, no. Those you have obliged most, most certainly avoid you, when you can oblige 'em no longer; and they take your visits like so many duns. Friends, like mistresses, are avoided for obligations past.

Free. Pshaw! but most of 'em are your relations; men of great fortune and honour.

Man. Yes; but relations have so much honour as to think poverty taints the blood, and disown their wanting kindred; believing, I suppose, that as riches at first make a gentleman, the want of 'em degrades him. But damn 'em! now I am

poor, I'll anticipate their contempt, and disown them.

Free. But you have many a female acquaintance whom you have been liberal to, who may have a heart to refund to you a little, if you would ask it: they are not all Olivias.

Man. Damn thee! how couldst thou think of such a thing? I would as soon rob my footman of his wages. Besides, 'twere in vain too: for a wench is like a box in an ordinary, receives all people's money easily, but there is no getting, nay, shaking any out again; and he that fills it is sure never to keep the key.

Free. Well, but noble captain, would you make me believe that you, who know half the town, have so many friends, and have obliged so many, can't borrow fifty or a hundred pounds?

Man. Why, noble lieutenant, you who know all the town, and call all you know friends, methinks should not wonder at it; since you find ingratitude too. For how many lords' families (though descended from blacksmiths or tinkers) hast thou called great and illustrious? how many ill tables called good eating? how many noisy coxcombs wits? how many pert coaching cowards stout? how many tawdry affected rogues well-dressed? how many perukes admired? and how many ill verses applauded? and yet canst not borrow a shilling. Dost thou expect I, who always spoke truth, should?

Free. Nay, now you think you have paid me; but hark you, captain, I have heard of a thing called grinning honour, but never of starving honour.

Man. Well, but it has been the fate of some brave men: and if they won't give me a ship again, I can go starve anywhere with a musket on my shoulder.

Free. Give you a ship! why, you will not solicit it.

Man. If I have not solicited it by my services, I know no other way.

Free. Your servant, sir; nay, then I'm satisfied, I must solicit my widow the closer, and run the desperate fortune of matrimony on shore. [*Exit*.

Enter VERNISH.

Man. How!—Nay, here is a friend indeed; and he that has him in his arms can know no wants. [*Embraces* VERNISH.

Ver. Dear sir! and he that is in your arms is secure from all fears whatever; nay, our nation is secure by your defeat at sea, and the Dutch that fought against you have proved enemies to themselves only in bringing you back to us.

Man. Fy! fy! this from a friend? and yet from any other 'twere insufferable: I thought I should never have taken anything ill from you.

Ver. A friend's privilege is to speak his mind, though it be taken ill.

Man. But your tongue need not tell me you think too well of me; I have found it from your heart, which spoke in actions, your unalterable heart. But Olivia is false, my friend, which I suppose is no news to you.

Ver. He's in the right on't. [*Aside*.

Man. But couldst thou not keep her true to me?

Ver. Not for my heart, sir.

Man. But could you not perceive it at all before I went? could she so deceive us both?

Ver. I must confess, the first time I knew it was three days after your departure, when she received the money you had left in Lombard-street in her name; and her tears did not hinder her, it seems, from counting that. You would trust her with all, like a true generous lover.

Man. And she like a mean jilting—

Ver. Traitorous—

Man. Base—

Ver. Damned—

Man. Covetous—

Ver. Mercenary whore.—[*Aside*.] I can hardly hold from laughing.

Man. Ay, a mercenary whore indeed; for she made me pay her before I lay with her.

Ver. How!—Why, have you lain with her?

Man. Ay, ay.

Ver. Nay, she deserves you should report it at least, though you have not.

Man. Report it! by Heaven, 'tis true!

Ver. How! sure not.

Man. I do not use to lie, nor you to doubt me.

Ver. When?

Man. Last night, about seven or eight of the clock.

Ver. Ha!—[*Aside*.] Now I remember, I thought she spake as if she expected some other rather than me. A confounded whore, indeed!

Man. But what, thou wonderest at it! nay, you seem to be angry too.

Ver. I cannot but be enraged against her, for her usage of you: damned infamous, common jade!

Man. Nay, her cuckold, who first cuckolded me in my money, shall not laugh all himself: we will do him reason, shan't we?

Ver. Ay, ay.

Man. But thou dost not, for so great a friend, take pleasure enough in your friend's revenge, methinks.

Ver. Yes, yes; I'm glad to know it, since you have lain with her.

Man. Thou canst not tell who that rascal, her cuckold, is?

Ver. No.

Man. She would keep it from you, I suppose.

Ver. Yes, yes.

Man. Thou wouldst laugh, if thou knewest but all the circumstances of my having her. Come, I'll tell thee.

Ver. Damn her! I care not to hear any more of her.

Man. Faith, thou shalt. You must know—

Re-enter FREEMAN *backwards, endeavouring to keep out* NOVEL, LORD PLAUSIBLE, JERRY, *and* OLDFOX, *who all press upon him*.

Free. I tell you he has a wench with him, and would be private.

Man. Damn 'em! a man can't open a bottle in these eating-houses, but presently you have these impudent, intruding, buzzing flies and insects in your glass.—Well, I'll tell thee all anon. In the mean time prithee go to her, but not from me, and try if you can get her to lend me but a hundred pounds of my money, to supply my present wants; for I suppose there is no recovering any of it by law.

Ver. Not any: think not of it. Nor by this way neither.

Man. Go try, at least.

Ver. I'll go; but I can satisfy you beforehand it will be to no purpose. You'll no more find a refunding wench—

Man. Than a refunding lawyer; indeed their fees alike scarce ever return. However, try her; put it to her.

Ver. Ay, ay, I'll try her; put it to her home with a vengeance. [*Exit.*

Nov. Nay, you shall be our judge, Manly.—Come, major, I'll speak it to your teeth; if people provoke me to say bitter things to their faces, they must take what follows; though, like my lord Plausible, I'd rather do't civilly behind their backs.

Man. Nay, thou art a dangerous rogue, I've heard, behind a man's back.

Plaus. You wrong him sure, noble captain; he would do a man no more harm behind his back than to his face.

Free. I am of my lord's mind.

Man. Yes, a fool, like a coward, is the more to be feared behind a man's back more than a witty man; for, as a coward is more bloody than a brave man, a fool is more malicious than a man of wit.

Nov. A fool, tar,—a fool! nay, thou art a brave sea-judge of wit! a fool! Prithee when did you ever find me want something to say, as you do often?

Man. Nay, I confess thou art always talking, roaring, or making a noise; that I'll say for thee.

Nov. Well, and is talking a sign of a fool?

Man. Yes, always talking, especially too if it be loud and fast, is the sign of a fool.

Nov. Pshaw! talking is like fencing, the quicker the better; run 'em down, run 'em down, no matter for parrying; push on still, sa, sa, sa! No matter whether you argue in form, push in guard or no.

Man. Or hit or no; I think thou always talkest without thinking, Novel.

Nov. Ay, ay; studied play's the worse, to follow the allegory, as the old pedant says.

Old. A young fop!

Man. I ever thought the man of most wit had been like him of most money, who has no vanity in showing it everywhere, whilst the beggarly pusher of his fortune has all he has about him still only to show.

Nov. Well, sir, and make a very pretty show in the world, let me tell you; nay, a better than your close hunks. A pox, give me ready money in play! what care I for a man's reputation? what are we the better for your substantial thrifty curmudgeon in wit, sir?

Old. Thou art a profuse young rogue indeed.

Nov. So much for talking, which, I think, I have proved a mark of wit; and so is railing, roaring, and making a noise; for railing is satire, you know; and roaring and making a noise, humour.

Re-enter FIDELIA; *she takes* MANLY *aside, and shows him a paper.*

Fid. The hour is betwixt seven and eight exactly: 'tis now half an hour after six.

Man. Well, go then to the Piazza, and wait for me: as soon as it is quite dark, I'll be with you. I must stay here yet a while for my friend.—[*Exit* FIDELIA.] But is railing satire, Novel?

Free. And roaring and making a noise, humour?

Nov. What, won't you confess there's humour in roaring and making a noise?

Free. No.

Nov. Nor in cutting napkins and hangings?

Man. No, sure.

Nov. Dull fops!

Old. O rogue, rogue, insipid rogue!—Nay, gentlemen, allow him those things for wit; for his parts lie only that way.

Nov. Peace, old fool! I wonder not at thee; but that young fellows should be so dull, as to say there's no humour in making a noise, and breaking windows! I tell you there's wit and humour too in both; and a wit is as well known by his frolic as by his smile.

Old. Pure rogue! there's your modern wit for you! Wit and humour in breaking of windows! there's mischief, if you will, but no wit or humour.

Nov. Prithee, prithee, peace, old fool! I tell you, where there's mischief, there's wit. Don't we esteem the monkey a wit amongst beasts, only because he's mischievous? and, let me tell you, as good-nature is a sign of a fool, being mischievous is a sign of a wit.

Old. O rogue, rogue! pretend to be a wit, by doing mischief and railing!

Nov. Why, thou, old fool, hast no other pretence to the name of a wit, but by railing at new plays!

Old. Thou, by railing at that facetious noble way of wit, quibbling?

Nov. Thou callest thy dulness gravity; and thy dozing, thinking.

Old. You, sir, your dulness, spleen; and you talk much and say nothing.

Nov. Thou readest much, and understandest nothing, sir.

Old. You laugh loud, and break no jest.

Nov. You rail, and nobody hangs himself; and thou hast nothing of the satire but in thy face.

Old. And you have no jest, but your face, sir.

Nov. Thou art an illiterate pedant.

Old. Thou art a fool with a bad memory.

Man. Come, a pox on you both! you have done like wits now: for you wits, when you quarrel, never give over till ye prove one another fools.

Nov. And you fools have never any occasion of laughing at us wits but when we quarrel. Therefore let us be friends, Oldfox.

Man. They are such wits as thou art, who make the name of a wit as scandalous as that of bully; and signify a loud-laughing, talking, incorrigible coxcomb, as bully a roaring hardened coward.

Free. And would have his noise and laughter pass for wit, as t'other his huffing and blustering for courage.

Re-enter VERNISH.

Man. Gentlemen, with your leave, here is one I would speak with; and I have nothing to say to you. [*Puts all out of the room except* VERNISH.

Ver. I told you 'twas in vain to think of getting money out of her. She says, if a shilling would do't, she would not save you from starving or hanging, or what you would think worse, begging or flattering; and rails so at you, one would not think you had lain with her.

Man. O, friend, never trust for that matter a woman's railing; for she is no less a dissembler in her hatred than her love; and as her fondness of her husband is a sign he's a cuckold, her railing at another man is a sign she lies with him.

Ver. He's in the right on't: I know not what to it to. [*Aside.*

Man. But you did not take any notice of it to , I hope?

Ver. So!—Sure he is afraid I should have disved him by an inquiry of her: all may be well [*Aside.*

Man. What hast thou in thy head that makes seem so unquiet?

Ver. Only this base impudent woman's falses; I cannot put her out of my head.

Man. O, my dear friend, be not you too sensi of my wrongs; for then I shall feel 'em too h more pain, and think 'em unsufferable. nn her, her money, and that ill-natured whore , Fortune herself! But if thou wouldst ease a e my present trouble, prithee go borrow me iewhere else some money. I can trouble thee.

Ver. You trouble me, indeed, most sensibly, en you command me anything I cannot do. I e lately lost a great deal of money at play, more n I can yet pay; so that not only my money, my credit too is gone, and know not where to row; but could rob a church for you.—[*Aside.*] would rather end your wants by cutting your oat.

Man. Nay, then I doubly feel my poverty, since incapable of supplying thee. [*Embraces him.*

Ver. But, methinks, she that granted you the favour, (as they call it,) should not deny you thing—

Nov. [*Looking in.*] Hey, tarpaulin, have you e? [*Retires again.*

Ver. I understand not that point of kindness, I fess.

Man. No, thou dost not understand it, and I e not time to let you know all now; for these s, you see, will interupt us: but anon, at per, we'll laugh at leisure together at Olivia's kold, who took a young fellow, that goes between wife and me, for a woman.

Ver. Ha!

Man. Senseless easy rascal! 'twas no wonder chose him for a husband; but she thought , I thank her, fitter than me, for that blind ring office.

Ver. I could not be deceived in that long nan's hair tied up behind, nor those infallible ofs, her pouting swelling breasts: I have dled too many sure not to know 'em. [*Aside.*

Man. What, you wonder the fellow could be h a blind coxcomb?

Ver. Yes, yes—

Nov. [*Looking in again.*] Nay, prithee, come is, Manly. Gad, all the fine things one says in ir company, are lost without thee.

Man. Away, fop! I'm busy yet. [NOVEL *retires.*] u see we cannot talk here at our ease; besides, iust be gone immediately, in order to meeting h Olivia again to-night.

Ver. To-night! it cannot be, sure—

Man. I had an appointment just now from her.

Ver. For what time?

Man. At half an hour after seven precisely.

Ver. Don't you apprehend the husband?

Man. He! sniveling gull! he a thing to be ed! a husband! the tamest of creatures!

Ver. Very fine! [*Aside.*

Man. But, prithee, in the mean time, go try to me some money. Though thou art too modest to borrow for thyself, thou canst do anything for me, I know. Go; for I must be gone to Olivia. Go, and meet me here anon.—Freeman, where are you? [*Exit.*

Ver. Ay, I'll meet with you, I warrant; but it shall be at Olivia's. Sure, it cannot be: she denies it so calmly, and with that honest modest assurance, it cannot be true—and he does not use to lie—but belying a woman when she won't be kind, is the only lie a brave man will least scruple. But then the woman in man's clothes, whom he calls a man—well, but by her breasts I know her to be a woman—but then again, his appointment from her, to meet with him to-night! I am distracted more with doubt than jealousy. Well, I have no way to disabuse or revenge myself, but by going home immediately, putting on a riding-suit, and pretending to my wife the same business which carried me out of town last, requires me again to go post to Oxford to-night. Then, if the appointment he boasts of be true, it's sure to hold, and I shall have an opportunity either of clearing her, or revenging myself on both. Perhaps she is his wench, of an old date, and I am his cully, whilst I think him mine; and he has seemed to make his wench rich, only that I might take her off his hands. Or if he has but lately lain with her, he must needs discover by her my treachery to him; which I'm sure he will revenge with my death, and which I must prevent with his, if it were only but for fear of his too just reproaches; for I must confess, I never had till now any excuse but that of interest, for doing ill to him. [*Exit.*

Re-enter MANLY *and* FREEMAN.

Man. Come hither; only, I say, be sure you mistake not the time. You know the house exactly where Olivia lodges, 'tis just hard by.

Free. Yes, yes.

Man. Well then, bring 'em all, I say, thither, and all you know that may be then in the house; for the more witnesses I have of her infamy, the greater will be my revenge: and be sure you come straight up to her chamber without more ado. Here, take the watch; you see 'tis above a quarter past seven; be there in half an hour exactly.

Free. You need not doubt my diligence or dexterity; I am an old scourer, and can naturally beat up a wench's quarters that won't be civil. Shan't we break her windows too?

Man. No, no; be punctual only. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in the same.*

Enter Widow BLACKACRE, *and two* Knights of the Post, *a* Waiter *following with wine.*

Wid. Sweetheart, are you sure the door was shut close, that none of those roysters saw us come?

Wait. Yes, mistress; and you shall have a privater room above, instantly. [*Exit.*

Wid. You are safe enough, gentlemen; for I have been private in this house ere now, upon other occasions, when I was something younger. Come, gentlemen, in short, I leave my business to your care and fidelity: and so, here's to you.

1 Knight. We are ungrateful rogues if we should not be honest to you; for we have had a great deal of your money.

Wid. And you have done me many a good job for't; and so, here's to you again.

2 *Knight.* Why, we have been perjured but six times for you.

1 *Knight.* Forged but four deeds, with your husband's last deed of gift.

2 *Knight.* And but three wills.

1 *Knight.* And counterfeited hands and seals to some six bonds; I think that's all, brother?

Wid. Ay, that's all, gentlemen; and so, here's to you again.

2 *Knight.* Nay, 'twould do one's heart good to be forsworn for you. You have a conscience in your ways, and pay us well.

1 *Knight.* You are in the right on't, brother; one would be damned for her with all one's heart.

2 *Knight.* But there are rogues, who make us forsworn for 'em; and when we come to be paid, they'll be forsworn too, and not pay us our wages, which they promised with oaths sufficient.

1 *Knight.* Ay, a great lawyer that shall be nameless bilked me too.

Wid. That was hard, methinks, that a lawyer should use gentlemen witnesses no better.

2 *Knight.* A lawyer! d'ye wonder a lawyer should do't? I was bilked by a reverend divine, that preaches twice on Sundays, and prays half an hour still before dinner.

Wid. How! a conscientious divine and not pay people for damning themselves! sure then, for all his talking, he does not believe damnation. But, come, to our business. Pray be sure to imitate exactly the flourish at the end of this name.

[*Pulls out a deed or two.*

1 *Knight.* O, he's the best in England at untangling a flourish, madam.

Wid. And let not the seal be a jot bigger. Observe well the dash too, at the end of this name.

2 *Knight.* I warrant you, madam.

Wid. Well, these and many other shifts, poor widows are put to sometimes; for everybody would be riding a widow, as they say, and breaking into her jointure. They think marrying a widow an easy business, like leaping the hedge where another has gone over before. A widow is a mere gap, a gap with them.

Enter Major OLDFOX, *with two* Waiters. *The* Knights of the Post *huddle up the writings.*

What, he here! Go then, go my hearts, you have your instructions. [*Exeunt* Knights of the Post.

Old. Come, madam, to be plain with you, I'll be fobbed off no longer.—[*Aside.*] I'll bind her and gag her but she shall hear me.—[*To the* Waiters.] Look you, friends, there's the money I promised you; and now do you what you promised me: here my garters, and here's a gag.—[*To the* Widow.] You shall be acquainted with my parts, lady, you shall.

Wid. Acquainted with your parts! A rape! a rape!—what, will you ravish me?

[*The* Waiters *tie her to the chair, gag her, and exeunt.*

Old. Yes, lady, I will ravish you; but it shall be through the ear, lady, the ear only, with my well-penned acrostics.

Enter FREEMAN, JERRY BLACKACRE, *three* Bailiffs, *a* Constable, *and his* Assistants, *with the two* Knights of the Post.

What, shall I never read my things undisturbed again?

Jer. O la! my mother bound hand and foot, and gaping as if she rose before her time to-day!

Free. What means this, Oldfox? But I'll release you from him; you shall be no man's prisoner but mine. Bailiffs, execute your writ.

[*Unties her.*

Old. Nay, then, I'll be gone, for fear of being bail, and paying her debts without being her husband. [*Exit.*

1 *Bail.* We arrest you in the king's name, at the suit of Mr. Freeman, guardian to Jeremiah Blackacre, Esquire, in an action of ten thousand pounds.

Wid. How, how, in a choke-bail action! What, and the pen-and-ink gentlemen taken too!—Have you confessed, you rogues?

1 *Knight.* We needed not to confess; for the bailiffs have dogged us hither to the very door, and overheard all that you and we said.

Wid. Undone, undone then! no man was ever too hard for me till now. O Jerry, child, wilt thou vex again the womb that bore thee?

Jer. Ay, for bearing me before wedlock, as you say. But I'll teach you to call a Blackacre bastard, though you were never so much my mother.

Wid. [*Aside.*] Well, I'm undone! not one trick left? no law-mesh imaginable?—[*To* FREEMAN.] Cruel sir, a word with you, I pray.

Free. In vain, madam; for you have no other way to release yourself, but by the bonds of matrimony.

Wid. How, sir, how! that were but to sue out a habeas-corpus, for a removal from one prison to another.—Matrimony!

Free. Well, bailiffs, away with her.

Wid. O stay, sir! can you be so cruel as to bring me under Covert-Baron again, and put it out of my power to sue in my own name? Matrimony to a woman is worse than excommunication, in depriving her of the benefit of the law; and I would rather be deprived of life. But hark you, sir, I am contented you should hold and enjoy my person by lease or patent, but not by the spiritual patent called a licence; that is, to have the privileges of a husband, without the dominion; that is, *Durante beneplacito*. In consideration of which, I will out of my jointure secure you an annuity of three hundred pounds a year, and pay your debts; and that's all you younger brothers desire to marry a widow for, I'm sure.

Free. Well, widow, if—

Jer. What! I hope, bully guardian, you are not making agreements without me?

Free. No, no. First, widow, you must say no more that he is a son of a whore; have a care of that. And, then, he must have a settled exhibition of forty pounds a year, and a nag of assizes, kept by you, but not upon the common; and have free ingress, egress, and regress, to and from your maids' garret.

Wid. Well, I can grant all that too.

Jer. Ay, ay, fair words butter no cabbage: but, guardian, make her sign, sign and seal; for otherwise, if you knew her as well as I, you would not trust her word for a farthing.

Free. I warrant thee, squire.—Well, widow, since thou art so generous, I will be generous too; and if you'll secure me four hundred pounds a year, but during your life, and pay my debts, not above a thousand pounds, I'll bate you your person, to dispose of as you please.

Wid. Have a care, sir, a settlement without a consideration is void in law; you must do something for't.

Free. Prithee, then let the settlement on me be called alimony; and the consideration, our separation. Come; my lawyer, with writings ready drawn, is within, and in haste. Come.

Wid. But, what, no other kind of consideration, Mr. Freeman? Well, a widow, I see, is a kind of sinecure, by custom of which the unconscionable incumbent enjoys the profits, without any duty, but does that still elsewhere. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—Olivia's *Lodging.*

Enter Olivia *with a candle in her hand.*

Oliv. So, I am now prepared once more for my timorous young lover's reception. My husband is gone; and go thou out too, thou next interrupter of love.—[*Puts out the candle.*] Kind darkness, that frees us lovers from scandal and bashfulness, from the censure of our gallants and the world!—So, are you there?

Enter Fidelia, *followed softly by* Manly.

Come, my dear punctual lover, there is not such another in the world; thou hast beauty and youth to please a wife; address and wit, to amuse and fool a husband; nay, thou hast all things to be wished in a lover, but your fits. I hope, my dear, you won't have one to-night; and that you may not, I'll lock the door, though there be no need of it, but to lock out your fits: for my husband is just gone out of town again. Come, where are you? [*Goes to the door and locks it.*

Man. Well, thou hast impudence enough to give me fits too, and make revenge itself impotent; hinder me from making thee yet more infamous, if it can be. [*Aside.*

Oliv. Come, come, my soul, come.

Fid. Presently, my dear, we have time enough sure.

Oliv. How, time enough! True lovers can no more think they ever have time enough, than love enough. You shall stay with me all night; but that is but a lover's moment. Come.

Fid. But won't you let me give you and myself the satisfaction of telling you how I abused your husband last night?

Oliv. Not when you can give me, and yourself too, the satisfaction of abusing him again to-night. Come.

Fid. Let me but tell you how your husband—

Oliv. O name not his, or Manly's more loathsome name, if you love me! I forbid 'em last night: and you know I mentioned my husband but once, and he came. No talking, pray, 'twas ominous to us.—[*A noise at the door.*] You make me fancy a noise at the door already, but I'm resolved not to be interrupted. Where are you? Come, for rather than lose my dear expectation now, though my husband were at the door, and the bloody ruffian Manly here in the room, with all his awful insolence, I would give myself to this dear hand, to be led away to heavens of joys, which none but thou canst give.—[*The noise at the door increases.*] But what's this noise at the door? So, I told you what talking would come to. Ha!—O heavens, my husband's voice!— [*Listens at the door.*

Man. [*Aside.*] Freeman is come too soon.

Oliv. O, 'tis he!—Then here's the happiest minute lost that ever bashful boy or trifling woman fooled away! I'm undone! my husband's reconcilement too was false, as my joy all delusion. But come this way, here's a back door.—[*Exit, and returns.*] The officious jade has locked us in, instead of locking others out; but let us then escape your way, by the balcony; and whilst you pull down the curtains, I'll fetch from my closet what next will best secure our escape. I have left my key in the door, and 'twill not suddenly be broken open. [*Exit.*

[*A noise as it were people forcing the door.*

Man. Stir not yet, fearing nothing.

Fid. Nothing but your life, sir.

Man. We shall know this happy man she calls husband.

Re-enter Olivia.

Oliv. Oh, where are you? What, idle with fear? Come, I'll tie the curtains, if you will hold. Here take this cabinet and purse, for it is thine, if we escape;—[Manly *takes them from her*]—therefore let us make haste. [*Exit.*

Man. 'Tis mine indeed now again, and it shall never escape more from me, to you at least.

[*The door broke open, enter* Vernish *with a dark-lantern and a sword, running at* Manly, *who draws, puts by the thrust, and defends himself, whilst* Fidelia *runs at* Vernish *behind.*

Ver. So, there I'm right, sure— [*In a low voice.*

Man. [*Softly.*] Sword and dark-lantern, villain, are some odds; but—

Ver. Odds! I'm sure I find more odds than I expected. What, has my insatiable two seconds at once? but— [*In a low voice.*

[*Whilst they fight,* Olivia *re-enters, tying two curtains together.*

Oliv. Where are you now?—What, is he entered then, and are they fighting? O do not kill one that can make no defence!—[Manly *throws* Vernish *down and disarms him.*] How! but I think he has the better on't. Here's his scarf, 'tis he. So, keep him down still: I hope thou hast no hurt, my dearest? [*Embracing* Manly.

Enter Freeman, Lord Plausible, Novel, Jerry Blackacre, *and the* Widow Blackacre, *lighted by the two* Sailors *with torches.*

Ha!—what!—Manly! and have I been thus concerned for him! embracing him! and has he his jewels again too! What means this? O, 'tis too sure, as well as my shame! which I'll go hide for ever. [*Offers to go out,* Manly *stops her.*

Man. No, my dearest; after so much kindness as has passed between us, I cannot part with you yet. —Freeman, let nobody stir out of the room; for notwithstanding your lights, we are yet in the dark, till this gentleman please to turn his face—[*Pulls* Vernish *by the sleeve.*] How, Vernish! art thou the happy man then? thou! thou! speak, I say; but thy guilty silence tells me all.—Well, I shall not upbraid thee; for my wonder is striking me as dumb as thy shame has made thee. But what? my little volunteer hurt, and fainting!

Fid. My wound, sir, is but a slight one in my arm; tis only my fear of your danger, sir, not yet well over.

Man. But what's here? more strange things!

—[*Observing* FIDELIA'S *hair untied behind, and without a peruke, which she lost in the scuffle.*] What means this long woman's hair, and face! now all of it appears too beautiful for a man; which I still thought womanish indeed! What, you have not deceived me too, my little volunteer?

Oliv. Me she has, I'm sure. [*Aside.*

Man. Speak!

Enter ELIZA *and* LETTICE.

Eliza. What, cousin, I am brought hither by your woman, I suppose, to be a witness of the second vindication of your honour?

Oliv. Insulting is not generous. You might spare me, I have you.

Eliza. Have a care, cousin, you'll confess anon too much; and I would not have your secrets.

Man. Come, your blushes answer me sufficiently, and you have been my volunteer in love. [*To* FIDELIA.

Fid. I must confess I needed no compulsion to follow you all the world over; which I attempted in this habit, partly out of shame to own my love to you, and fear of a greater shame, your refusal of it: for I knew of your engagement to this lady, and the constancy of your nature; which nothing could have altered but herself.

Man. Dear madam, I desired you to bring me out of confusion, and you have given me more. I know not what to speak to you, or how to look upon you; the sense of my rough, hard, and ill usage of you, (though chiefly your own fault,) gives me more pain now 'tis over, than you had when you suffered it: and if my heart, the refusal of such a woman—[*Pointing to* OLIVIA]—were not a sacrifice to profane your love, and a greater wrong to you than ever yet I did you; I would beg of you to receive it, though you used it as she had done; for though it deserved not from her the treatment she gave it, it does from you.

Fid. Then it has had punishment sufficient from her already, and needs no more from me; and, I must confess, I would not be the only cause of making you break your last night's oath to me, of never parting with me; if you do not forget or repent it.

Man. Then take for ever my heart, and this with it;—(*gives her the cabinet*) for 'twas given to you before, and my heart was before your due: I only beg leave to dispose of these few.—Here, madam, I never yet left my wench unpaid.

[*Takes some of the jewels, and offers them to* OLIVIA; *she strikes them down:* PLAUSIBLE *and* NOVEL *take them up.*

Oliv. So it seems, by giving her the cabinet.

Plaus. These pendants appertain to your most faithful humble servant.

Nov. And this locket is mine; my earnest for love, which she never paid: therefore my own again.

Wid. By what law, sir, pray?—Cousin Olivia, a word. What, do they make a seizure on your goods and chattels, *vi et armis?* Make your demand, I say, and bring your trover, bring your trover. I'll follow the law for you.

Oliv. And I my revenge. [*Exit.*

Man. [*To* VERNISH.] But 'tis, my friend, in your consideration most, that I would have returned part of your wife's portion; for 'twere hard to take all from thee, since thou hast paid so dear for't, in being such a rascal. Yet thy wife is a fortune without a portion; and thou art a man of that extraordinary merit in villany, the world and fortune can never desert thee, though I do; therefore be not melancholy. Fare you well, sir.—[*Exit* VERNISH *doggedly.*] Now, madam, I beg your pardon [*turning to* FIDELIA] for lessening the present I made you; but my heart can never be lessened. This, I confess, was too small for you before; for you deserve the Indian world; and I would now go thither, out of covetousness for your sake only.

Fid. Your heart, sir, is a present of that value, I can never make any return to't.—[*Pulling* MANLY *from the company.*] But I can give you back such a present as this, which I got by the loss of my father, a gentleman of the north, of no mean extraction, whose only child I was, therefore left me in the present possession of two thousand pounds a-year; which I left, with multitudes of pretenders, to follow you, sir; having in several public places seen you, and observed your actions thoroughly, with admiration, when you were too much in love to take notice of mine, which yet was but too visible. The name of my family is Grey, my other Fidelia. The rest of my story you shall know when I have fewer auditors.

Man. Nay, now, madam, you have taken from me all power of making you any compliment on my part; for I was going to tell you, that for your sake only I would quit the unknown pleasure of a retirement; and rather stay in this ill world of ours still, though odious to me, than give you more frights again at sea, and make again too great a venture there, in you alone. But if I should tell you now all this, and that your virtue (since greater than I thought any was in the world) had now reconciled me to't, my friend here would say, 'tis your estate that has made me friends with the world.

Free. I must confess I should; for I think most of our quarrels to the world are just such as we have to a handsome woman; only because we cannot enjoy her as we would do.

Man. Nay, if thou art a plain dealer too, give me thy hand; for now I'll say, I am thy friend indeed; and for your two sakes, though I have been so lately deceived in friends of both sexes,—

I will believe there are now in the world
Good-natured friends, who are not prostitutes,
And handsome women worthy to be friends:
Yet, for my sake, let no one e'er confide
In tears, or oaths, in love, or friend untried.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY THE WIDOW BLACKACRE

To you the judges learnèd in stage-laws,
Our poet now, by me, submits his cause;
For with young judges, such as most of you,
The men by women best their business do:
And, truth on't is, if you did not sit here,
To keep for us a term throughout the year,
We could not live by'r tongues; nay, but for you,
Our chamber-practice would be little too.
And 'tis not only the stage-practiser
Who by your meeting gets her living here:
For as in Hall of Westminster
Sleek sempstress vents amidst the courts her ware;
So, while we bawl, and you in judgment sit,
The visor-mask sells linen too i' th' pit.
O, many of your friends, besides us here,
Do live by putting off their several ware.
Here's daily done the great affairs o'th' nation;
Let love and us then ne'er have long vacation.
But hold; like other pleaders I have done
Not my poor client's business, but my own.
Spare me a word then now for him. First know,
Squires of the long robe, he does humbly show,
He has a just right in abusing you,
Because he is a Brother-Templar too:
For at the bar you rally one another;
Nay, fool and knave, is swallow'd from a brother:
If not the poet here, the Templar spare,
And maul him when you catch him at the bar.
From you, our common modish censurers,
Your favour, not your judgment, 'tis he fears:
Of all love begs you then to rail, find fault;
For plays, like women, by the world are thought,
When you speak kindly of 'em, very naught.

END OF WYCHERLEY.

THE

DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

COMMENDATORY VERSES.

To Mr. CONGREVE.

On "The Old Bachelor."

WHEN virtue in pursuit of fame appears,
And forward shoots the growth beyond the years,
We timely court the rising hero's cause,
And on his side the poet wisely draws;
Bespeaking him hereafter by applause.
The days will come when we shall all receive
Returning interest from what now we give;
Instructed and supported by that praise
And reputation which we strive to raise.
Nature so coy, so hardly to be woo'd,
Flies like a mistress, but to be pursued.
O CONGREVE! boldly follow on the chase;
She looks behind, and wants thy strong embrace;
She yields, she yields, surrenders all her charms,
Do you but force her gently to your arms:
Such nerves, such graces, in your lines appear,
As you were made to be her ravisher.
Dryden has long extended his command,
By right divine, quite through the Muses' land
Absolute lord; and holding now from none,
But great Apollo, his undoubted crown;
(That empire settled, and grown old in power)
Can wish for nothing but a successor:
Not to enlarge his limits, but maintain
Those provinces which he alone could gain.
His eldest Wycherley, in wise retreat,
Thought it not worth his quiet to be great.
Loose, wandering Etherege, in wild pleasures tost
And foreign interests, to his hopes long lost:
Poor Lee and Otway dead! CONGREVE appears,
The darling and last comfort of his years.
Mayst thou live long in thy great Master's smiles,
And growing under him, adorn these isles:
But when—when part of him (be that but late)
His body yielding must submit to fate,
Leaving his deathless works and thee behind,
(The natural successor of his mind,)
Then mayst thou finish what he has begun;
Heir to his merit, be in fame his son.
What thou hast done shows all is in thy power;
And to write better, only must write more.
'Tis something to be willing to commend;
But my best praise, is that I am your friend.

THO. SOUTHERNE.

To Mr. CONGREVE.

On "The Old Bachelor."

THE danger's great in these censorious days,
When critics are so rife, to venture praise:
When the infectious and ill-natured brood
Behold and damn the work because 'tis good;
And with a proud, ungenerous spirit, try
To pass an ostracism on poetry.
But you, my friend, your worth does safely bear
Above their spleen; you have no cause for fear;
Like a well-mettled hawk you took your flight
Quite out of reach, and almost out of sight.
As the strong sun, in a fair summer's day,
You rise, and drive the mists and clouds away,
The owls and bats, and all the birds of prey.
Each line of yours like polish'd steel's so hard,
In beauty safe it wants no other guard:
Nature herself's beholden to your dress,
Which though still like, much fairer you express.
Some vainly striving honour to obtain,
Leave to their heirs the traffic of their brain,
Like china under ground, the ripening ware,
In a long time, perhaps grows worth our care.
But you now reap the fame, so well you've sown;
The planter tastes his fruit to ripeness grown.
As a fair orange-tree at once is seen
Big with what's ripe, yet springing still with green,
So at one time my worthy friend appears,
With all the sap of youth, and weight of years.
Accept my pious love, as forward zeal,
Which, though it ruins me, I can't conceal:
Exposed to censure for my weak applause,
I'm pleased to suffer in so just a cause:
And though my offering may unworthy prove,
Take, as a friend, the wishes of my love.

J. MARSH.

To Mr. CONGREVE.

On his Play called "The Old Bachelor."

WIT, like true gold refined from all allay,
Immortal is, and never can decay;
'Tis in all times and languages the same,
Nor can an ill translation quench the flame:
For though the form and fashion don't remain,
The intrinsic value still it will retain.
Then let each studied scene be writ with art;
And judgment sweat to form the labour'd part;
Each character be just, and Nature seem;
Without the ingredient, wit, 'tis all but phlegm:
For that's the soul which all the mass must move,
And wake our passions into grief, or love.
But you, too bounteous, sow your wit so thick,
We are surprised, and know not where to pick:
And while with clapping we are just to you,
Ourselves we injure, and lose something new.
What mayn't we then, great youth, of thee presage,
Whose art and wit so much transcend thy age?
How wilt thou shine at thy meridian height,
Who, at thy rising, givest so vast a light!
When Dryden dying shall the world deceive,
Whom we immortal, as his works, believe;
Thou shalt succeed, the glory of the stage,
Adorn and entertain the coming age.

BEVIL HIGGONS.

To my dear Friend Mr. CONGREVE, *on his Comedy called "The Double-Dealer."*

WELL, then, the promised hour is come at last;
The present age of wit obscures the past:
Strong were our sires, and as they fought they writ,
Conquering with force of arms and dint of wit;
Theirs was the giant race before the flood;
And thus, when Charles return'd, our empire stood.
Like Janus he the stubborn soil manured,
With rules of husbandry the rankness cured:
Tamed us to manners, when the stage was rude;
And boisterous English wit with art endued.
Our age was cultivated thus at length;
But what we gain'd in skill we lost in strength.
Our builders were with want of genius curst;
The second temple was not like the first:
'Till you, the best Vitruvius, come at length,
Our beauties equal, but excel our strength.
Firm Doric pillars found your solid base,
The fair Corinthian crowns the higher space;
Thus all below is strength, and all above is grace.
In easy dialogue is Fletcher's praise;
He moved the mind, but had not power to raise.
Great Jonson did by strength of judgment please;
Yet doubling Fletcher's force, he wants his ease.
In differing talents both adorn'd their age;
One for the study, t'other for the stage.
But both to CONGREVE justly shall submit,
One match'd in judgment, both o'ermatch'd in wit.
In him all beauties of this age we see,
Etherege his courtship, Southerne's purity;
The satire, wit, and strength of manly Wycherley.
All this in blooming youth you have achieved;
Nor are your foil'd contemporaries grieved;
So much the sweetness of your manners move,
We cannot envy you, because we love.
Fabius might joy in Scipio, when he saw
A beardless consul made against the law,
And join his suffrage to the votes of Rome;
Though he with Hannibal was overcome.
Thus old Romano bow'd to Raphael's fame;
And scholar to the youth he taught became.
Oh! that your brows my laurel had sustain'd,
Well had I been deposed if you had reign'd!
The father had descended for the son;
For only you are lineal to the throne.
Thus when the state one Edward did depose,
A greater Edward in his room arose.
But now, not I, but poetry is curst;
For Tom the second reigns like Tom the first.
But let 'em not mistake my patron's part,
Nor call his charity their own desert.
Yet I this prophesy: Thou shalt be seen,
(Though with some short parenthesis between,)
High on the throne of wit; and seated there,
Not mine (that's little) but thy laurel wear.
Thy first attempt an early promise made,
That early promise this has more than paid;
So bold, yet so judiciously you dare,
That your least praise is to be regular.
Time, place, and action, may with pains be wrought,
But genius must be born, and never can be taught.
This is your portion, this your native store;
Heaven, that but once was prodigal before,
To Shakspeare gave as much; she could not give him more.
Maintain your post: that's all the fame you need;
For 'tis impossible you should proceed.
Already I am worn with cares and age,
And just abandoning the ungrateful stage:
Unprofitably kept at Heaven's expense,
I live a rent-charge on his providence.
But you, whom every Muse and Grace adorn,
Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
Be kind to my remains; and, oh defend,
Against your judgment, your departed friend!
Let not the insulting foe my fame pursue,
But shade those laurels which descend to you:
And take for tribute what these lines express;
You merit more, nor could my love do less.

JOHN DRYDEN.

To Mr. CONGREVE, *occasioned by his Comedy called "The Way of the World."*

WHEN pleasure's falling to the low delight,
In the vain joys of the uncertain sight;
No sense of wit when rude spectators know,
But in distorted gesture, farce and show;
How could, great author, your aspiring mind
Dare to write only to the few refined?
Yet though that nice ambition you pursue,
'Tis not in CONGREVE's power to please but few.
Implicitly devoted to his fame,
Well-dress'd barbarians know his awful name.
Though senseless they're of mirth, but when they laugh,
As they feel wine, but when, till drunk, they quaff.
On you from fate a lavish portion fell
In every way of writing to excel.
Your muse applause to Arabella brings,
In notes as sweet as Arabella sings.
Whene'er you draw an undissembled woe,
With sweet distress your rural numbers flow:
Pastora's the complaint of every swain,
Pastora still the echo of the plain!
Or if your muse describe, with warming force,
The wounded Frenchman falling from his horse;
And her own William glorious in the strife,
Bestowing on the prostrate foe his life:
You the great act as generously rehearse,
And all the English fury's in your verse.
By your selected scenes and handsome choice,
Ennobled Comedy exalts her voice;
You check unjust esteem and fond desire,
And teach to scorn what else we should admire:
The just impression taught by you we bear,
The player acts the world, the world the player;
Whom still that world unjustly disesteems,
Though he alone professes what he seems.
But when your muse assumes her tragic part,
She conquers and she reigns in every heart:
To mourn with her men cheat their private woe,
And generous pity's all the grief they know.
The widow, who, impatient of delay,
From the town joys must mask it to the play,
Joins with your Mourning Bride's resistless moan,
And weeps a loss she slighted when her own:
You give us torment, and you give us ease,
And vary our afflictions as you please.
Is not a heart so kind as yours in pain,
To load your friends with cares you only feign;
Your friends in grief, composed yourself, to leave?
But 'tis the only way you'll e'er deceive.
Then still, great sir, your moving power employ,
To lull our sorrow, and correct our joy.

RICHARD STEELE.

THE OLD BACHELOR.

A Comedy.

Quem tulit ad scenam ventoso gloria curru,
Exanimat lentus spectator, sedulus inflat.
Sic leve, sic parvum est, animum quod laudis avarum
Subruit, aut reficit.—HORAT. Lib. ii. Epist. 1.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES LORD CLIFFORD, OF LANESBOROUGH, &c.

MY LORD,—It is with a great deal of pleasure that I lay hold on this first occasion, which the accidents of my life have given me, of writing to your Lordship: for since, at the same time, I write to all the world, it will be a means of publishing (what I would have everybody know) the respect and duty which I owe and pay to you. I have so much inclination to be yours, that I need no other engagement: but the particular ties by which I am bound to your Lordship and family, have put it out of my power to make you any compliment; since all offers of myself will amount to no more than an honest acknowledgment, and only show a willingness in me to be grateful.

I am very near wishing that it were not so much my interest to be your Lordship's servant, that it might be more my merit; not that I would avoid being obliged to you, but I would have my own choice to run me into the debt; that I might have it to boast I had distinguished a man to whom I would be glad to be obliged, even without the hopes of having it in my power ever to make him a return.

It is impossible for me to come near your Lordship, in any kind, and not to receive some favour; and while in appearance I am only making an acknowledgment, (with the usual underhand dealing of the world,) I am, at the same time, insinuating my own interest. I cannot give your Lordship your due, without tacking a bill of my own privileges. It is true, if a man never committed a folly, he would never stand in need of a protection: but then power would have nothing to do, and good-nature no occasion to show itself; and where those qualities are, it is pity they should want objects to shine upon. I must confess this is no reason why a man should do an idle thing, nor indeed any good excuse for it, when done; yet it reconciles the uses of such authority and goodness to the necessities of our follies; and is a sort of poetical logic, which at this time I would make use of, to argue your Lordship into a protection of this play. It is the first offence I have committed in this kind, or indeed in any kind of poetry, though not the first made public; and therefore, I hope, will the more easily be pardoned: but had it been acted when it was first written, more might have been said in its behalf; ignorance of the town and stage would then have been excuses in a young writer, which now almost four years' experience will scarce allow of. Yet I must declare myself sensible of the good-nature of the town, in receiving this play so kindly, with all its faults, which I must own were, for the most part, very industriously covered by the care of the players; for I think, scarce a character but received all the advantage it would admit of, from the justness of the action.

As for the critics, my Lord, I have nothing to say to or against any of them of any kind; from those who make just exceptions, to those who find fault in the wrong place. I will only make this general answer in behalf of my play, (an answer which Epictetus advises every man to make for himself to his censurers,) viz.—*That if they who find some faults in it were as intimate with it as I am, they would find a great many more.* This is a confession which I needed not to have made; but however I can draw this use from it, to my own advantage, that I think there are no faults in it but what I do know; which, as I take it, is the first step to an amendment.

Thus I may live in hopes (some time or other) of making the town amends; but you, my Lord, I never can, though I am ever your Lordship's most obedient, and most humble servant, WILL. CONGREVE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HEARTWELL, *a surly old Bachelor, pretending to slight Women, secretly in love with* SILVIA.
BELLMOUR, *in love with* BELINDA.
VAINLOVE, *capricious in his love; in love with* ARAMINTA.
SHARPER.
SIR JOSEPH WITTOL.
CAPTAIN BLUFFE.
FONDLEWIFE, *a Banker.*
SETTER, *a Pimp.*
GAVOT, *a Music-master.*
PACE, *Footman to* ARAMINTA.
BARNABY, *Servant to* FONDLEWIFE.
A Boy.

ARAMINTA, *in love with* VAINLOVE.
BELINDA, *her Cousin, an affected Lady, in love with* BELLMOUR.
LÆTITIA, *Wife to* FONDLEWIFE.
SILVIA, VAINLOVE'S *forsaken Mistress.*
LUCY, *her Maid.*
BETTY, *Maid to* ARAMINTA.

Dancers, *and* Attendants.

SCENE,—LONDON.

PROLOGUE

INTENDED FOR THE "OLD BACHELOR."—WRITTEN BY THE LORD FALKLAND.

Most authors on the stage at first appear
Like widows' bridegrooms, full of doubt and fear:
They judge, from the experience of the dame,
How hard a task it is to quench her flame:
And who falls short of furnishing a course,
Up to his brawny predecessor's force,
With utmost rage from her embraces thrown,
Remains convicted, as an empty drone.
Thus often, to his shame, a pert beginner
Proves, in the end, a miserable sinner.
As for our youngster, I am apt to doubt him,
With all the vigour of his youth about him,
But he, more sanguine, trusts in one-and-twenty,
And impudently hopes he shall content you;
For though his Bachelor be worn and cold,
He thinks the young may club to help the old;
And what alone can be achieved by neither,
Is often brought about by both together.
The briskest of you all have felt alarms,
Finding the fair one prostitute her charms,
With broken sighs, in her old fumbler's arms.
But for our spark, he swears he'll ne'er be jealous
Of any rivals, but young lusty fellows.
Faith, let him try his chance, and if the slave,
After his bragging, prove a washy knave,
May he be banish'd to some lonely den,
And never more have leave to dip his pen:
But if he be the champion he pretends,
Both sexes sure will join to be his friends;
For all agree, where all can have their ends.
And you must own him for a man of might,
If he holds out to please you the third night.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MRS. BRACEGIRDLE.

How this vile world is changed! in former days
Prologues were serious speeches before plays;
Grave solemn things, as graces are to feasts,
Where poets begg'd a blessing from their guests.
But now, no more like suppliants we come;
A play makes war, and prologue is the drum:
Arm'd with keen satire, and with pointed wit,
We threaten you who do for judges sit,
To save our plays, or else we'll damn your pit.
But for your comfort, it falls out to-day,
We've a young author, and his first-born play;
So, standing only on his good behaviour,
He's very civil, and entreats your favour.
Not but the man has malice, would he show it,
But, on my conscience, he's a bashful poet;
You think that strange—no matter, he'll out-grow it.
Well, I'm his advocate—by me he prays you,
(I don't know whether I shall speak to please you)
He prays—O bless me! what shall I do now!
Hang me, if I know what he prays, or how!
And 'twas the prettiest prologue as he wrote it!
Well the deuse take me, if I han't forgot it!
O Lord, for heaven's sake excuse the play,
Because, you know, if it be damn'd to-day,
I shall be hang'd for wanting what to say.
For my sake then—but I'm in such confusion,
I cannot stay to hear your resolution. [*Runs off.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Street.*

BELLMOUR *and* VAINLOVE *meeting.*

Bell. Vainlove, and abroad so early! good morrow. I thought a contemplative lover could no more have parted with his bed in a morning, than he could have slept in't.

Vain. Bellmour, good morrow.—Why, truth on't is, these early sallies are not usual to me; but business, as you see, sir—[*Showing letters.*] And business must be followed, or be lost.

Bell. Business!—and so must time, my friend, be close pursued, or lost. Business is the rub of life, perverts our aim, casts off the bias, and leaves us wide and short of the intended mark.

Vain. Pleasure, I guess, you mean.

Bell. Ay, what else has meaning?

Vain. Oh, the wise will tell you—

Bell. More than they believe—or understand.

Vain. How, how, Ned, a wise man say more than he understands?

Bell. Ay, ay; wisdom's nothing but a pretending to know and believe more than we really do. You read of but one wise man, and all that he knew was, that he knew nothing. Come, come, leave business to idlers, and wisdom to fools: they have need of 'em: wit, be my faculty, and pleasure my occupation; and let father Time shake his glass. Let low and earthly souls grovel 'till they have worked themselves six foot deep into a grave. Business is not my element—I roll in a higher orb, and dwell—

Vain. In castles i'th' air of thy own building: that's thy element, Ned. Well, as high a flyer as you are, I have a lure may make you stoop. [*Flings a letter.*

Bell. Ay, marry, sir, I have a hawk's eye at a woman's hand.—There's more elegancy in the

false spelling of this superscription—[*Takes up the letter*] than in all Cicero.—Let me see—How now! *Dear perfidious Vainlove.* [*Reads.*

Vain. Hold! hold! 'slife, that's the wrong.

Bell. Nay, let's see the name—Silvia! How canst thou be ungrateful to that creature? She's extremely pretty, and loves thee entirely. I have heard her breathe such raptures about thee.

Vain. Ay, or anybody that she's about.

Bell. No, faith, Frank, you wrong her: she has been just to you.

Vain. That's pleasant, by my troth, from thee, who hast had her.

Bell. Never—her affections. 'Tis true, by heaven, she owned it to my face; and blushing like the virgin morn when it disclosed the cheat, which that trusty bawd of nature, Night, had hid, confessed her soul was true to you; though I by treachery had stolen the bliss.

Vain. So was true as turtle—in imagination, Ned, ha? Preach this doctrine to husbands, and the married women will adore thee.

Bell. Why, faith, I think it will do well enough, if the husband be out of the way, for the wife to show her fondness and impatience of his absence by choosing a lover as like him as she can; and what is unlike, she may help out with her own fancy.

Vain. But is it not an abuse to the lover to be made a blind of?

Bell. As you say, the abuse is to the lover, not the husband: for 'tis an argument of her great zeal towards him, that she will enjoy him in effigy.

Vain. It must be a very superstitious country, where such zeal passes for true devotion. I doubt it will be damned by all our protestant husbands for flat idolatry.—But if you can make alderman Fondlewife of your persuasion, this letter will be needless.

Bell. What, the old banker with the handsome wife?

Vain. Ay.

Bell. Let me see, Lætitia! oh, 'tis a delicious morsel!—Dear Frank, thou art the truest friend in the world.

Vain. Ay, am I not? to be continually starting of hares for you to course. We were certainly cut out for one another; for my temper quits an amour just where thine takes it up.—But read that, it is an appointment for me this evening, when Fondlewife will be gone out of town, to meet the master of a ship, about the return of a venture which he's in danger of losing. Read, read.

Bell. [*Reads.*] Hum, hum—*Out of town this evening, and talks of sending for Mr. Spintext to keep me company; but I'll take care he shall not be at home.* Good! Spintext! oh, the fanatic one-eyed parson!

Vain. Ay.

Bell. [*Reads*] Hum, hum—*That your conversation will be much more agreeable, if you can counterfeit his habit to blind the servants.* Very good! Then I must be disguised?—With all my heart—It adds a gusto to an amour, gives it the greater resemblance of theft, and, among us lewd mortals, the deeper the sin the sweeter. Frank, I'm amazed at thy good-nature.

Vain. Faith, I hate love when 'tis forced upon a man, as I do wine: and this business is none of my seeking. I only happened to be once or twice where Lætitia was the handsomest woman in company, so consequently applied myself to her; and it seems she has taken me at my word. Had you been there, or anybody, 't had been the same.

Bell. I wish I may succeed as the same.

Vain. Never doubt it; for if the spirit of cuckoldom be once raised up in a woman, the devil can't lay it, 'till she has done't.

Bell. Prithee, what sort of fellow is Fondlewife?

Vain. A kind of mongrel zealot, sometimes very precise and peevish; but I have seen him pleasant enough in his way; much addicted to jealousy, but more to fondness: so that as he's often jealous without a cause, he's as often satisfied without reason.

Bell. A very even temper, and fit for my purpose. I must get your man Setter to provide my disguise.

Vain. Ay, you may take him for good-and-all if you will, for you have made him fit for nobody else.—Well—

Bell. You're going to visit in return of Silvia's letter—poor rogue! Any hour of the day or night will serve her.—But do you know nothing of a new rival there?

Vain. Yes, Heartwell, that surly, old, pretended woman-hater, thinks her virtuous; that's one reason why I fail her: I would have her fret herself out of conceit with me, that she may entertain some thoughts of him. I know he visits her every day.

Bell. Yet rails on still, and thinks his love unknown to us. A little time will swell him so, he must be forced to give it birth; and the discovery must needs be very pleasant from himself, to see what pains he will take, and how he will strain to be delivered of a secret when he has miscarried of it already.

Vain. Well, good morrow, let's dine together; I'll meet at the old place.

Bell. With all my heart; it lies convenient for us to pay our afternoon services to our mistresses. I find I am damnably in love, I'm so uneasy for not having seen Belinda yesterday.

Vain. But I saw my Araminta, yet am as impatient.

SCENE II.

BELLMOUR.

Why, what a cormorant in love am I! who, not contented with the slavery of honourable love in one place, and the pleasure of enjoying some half a score mistresses of my own acquiring, must yet take Vainlove's business upon my hands, because it lay too heavy upon his: so am not only forced to lie with other men's wives for 'em, but must also undertake the harder task of obliging their mistresses.—I must take up, or I shall never hold out; flesh and blood cannot bear it always.

SCENE III.

BELLMOUR *and* SHARPER.

Sharp. I'm sorry to see this, Ned; once a man comes to his soliloquies I give him for gone.

Bell. Sharper, I'm glad to see thee.

Sharp. What, is Belinda cruel, that you are so thoughtful?

Bell. No, faith, not for that.—But there's a business of consequence fallen out to-day, that requires some consideration.

Sharp. Prithee, what mighty business of consequence canst thou have?

Bell. Why, you must know 'tis a piece of work toward the finishing of an alderman; it seems I must put the last hand to it, and dub him cuckold, that he may be of equal dignity with the rest of his brethren; so I must beg Belinda's pardon.

Sharp. Faith, e'en give her over for good-and-all; you can have no hopes of getting her for a mistress; and she is too proud, too inconstant, too affected and too witty, and too handsome for a wife.

Bell. But she can't have too much money.—There's twelve thousand pounds, Tom.—'Tis true she is excessively foppish and affected; but, in my conscience, I believe the baggage loves me; for she never speaks well of me herself, nor suffers anybody else to rail at me. Then, as I told you, there's twelve thousand pounds—hum—Why, faith, upon second thoughts, she does not appear to be so very affected neither.—Give her her due, I think the woman's a woman, and that's all. As such I am sure I shall like her, for the devil take me if I don't love all the sex!

Sharp. And here comes one who swears as heartily he hates all the sex.

SCENE IV.

Bellmour, Sharper, *and* Heartwell.

Bell. Who? Heartwell? ay, but he knows better things.—How now, George, where hast thou been snarling odious truths, and entertaining company like a physician, with discourse of their diseases and infirmities? What fine lady hast thou been putting out of conceit with herself, and persuading that the face she had been making all the morning was none of her own? for I know thou art as unmannerly and as unwelcome to a woman as a looking-glass after the small-pox.

Heart. I confess I have not been sneering fulsome lies and nauseous flattery, fawning upon a little tawdry whore that will fawn upon me again, and entertain any puppy that comes, like a tumbler, with the same tricks over and over. For such I guess may have been your late employment.

Bell. Would thou hadst come a little sooner! Vainlove would have wrought thy conversion, and been a champion for the cause.

Heart. What, has he been here? That's one of love's April-fools, is always upon some errand that's to no purpose, ever embarking in adventures, yet never comes to harbour.

Sharp. That's because he always sets out in foul weather, loves to buffet with the winds, meet the tide, and sail in the teeth of opposition.

Heart. What, has he not dropped anchor at Araminta?

Bell. Truth on't is, she fits his temper best, is a kind of floating-island; sometimes seems in reach, then vanishes, and keeps him busied in the search.

Sharp. She had need have a good share of sense to manage so capricious a lover.

Bell. Faith, I don't know; he's of a temper the most easy to himself in the world: he takes as much always of an amour as he cares for, and quits it when it grows stale or unpleasant.

Sharp. An argument of very little passion, very good understanding, and very ill-nature.

Heart. And proves that Vainlove plays the fool with discretion.

Sharp. You, Bellmour, are bound in gratitude to stickle for him; you with pleasure reap that fruit, which he takes pains to sow; he does the drudgery in the mine, and you stamp your image on the gold.

Bell. He's of another opinion, and says I do the drudgery in the mine. Well, we have each our share of sport, and each that which he likes best; 'tis his diversion to set, 'tis mine to cover the partridge.

Heart. And it should be mine to let 'em go again.

Sharp. Not till you had mouthed a little, George; I think that's all thou art fit for now.

Heart. Good Mr. Young-fellow, you're mistaken; as able as yourself, and as nimble too, though I mayn't have so much mercury in my limbs. 'Tis true, indeed, I don't force appetite, but wait the natural call of my lust, and think it time enough to be lewd, after I have had the temptation.

Bell. Time enough! ay too soon, I should rather have expected, from a person of your gravity.

Heart. Yet it is oftentimes too late with some of you young, termagant flashy sinners: you have all the guilt of the intention, and none of the pleasure of the practice. 'Tis true you are so eager in pursuit of the temptation, that you save the devil the trouble of leading you into it: nor is it out of discretion that you don't swallow that very hook yourselves have baited, but you are cloyed with the preparative, and what you mean for a whet, turns the edge of your puny stomachs. Your love is like your courage, which you show for the first year or two upon all occasions; till in a little time, being disabled or disarmed, you abate of your vigour, and that daring blade which was so often drawn is bound to the peace for ever after.

Bell. Thou art an old fornicator of a singular good principle indeed! and art for encouraging youth, that they may be as wicked as thou art at thy years.

Heart. I am for having everybody be what they pretend to be; a whoremaster be a whoremaster; and not like Vainlove, kiss a lapdog with passion, when it would disgust him from the lady's own lips.

Bell. That only happens sometimes, where the dog has the sweeter breath, for the more cleanly conveyance. But, George, you must not quarrel with little gallantries of this nature: women are often won by 'em. Who would refuse to kiss a lapdog, if it were preliminary to the lips of his lady?

Sharp. Or omit playing with her fan, and cooling her if she were hot, when it might entitle him to the office of warming her when she should be cold?

Bell. What is it to read a play in a rainy day, though you should be now and then interrupted in a witty scene, and she perhaps preserve her laughter,' till the jest were over! even that may be borne with, considering the reward in prospect.

Heart. I confess, you that are women's asses

bear greater burdens; are forced to undergo dressing, dancing, singing, sighing, whining, rhyming, flattering, lying, grinning, cringing, and the drudgery of loving to boot.

Bell. O brute! the drudgery of loving!

Heart. Ay, why to come to love through all these encumbrances, is like coming to an estate overcharged with debts; which, by the time you have paid, yields no further profit than what the bare tillage and manuring of the land will produce at the expense of your own sweat.

Bell. Prithee, how dost thou love?

Sharp. He! he hates the sex.

Heart. So I hate physic too—yet I may love to take it for my health.

Bell. Well come off, George, if at any time you should be taken straying.

Sharp. He has need of such an excuse, considering the present state of his body.

Heart. How d'ye mean?

Sharp. Why, if whoring be purging (as you call it), then, I may say, marriage is entering into a course of physic.

Bell. How, George, does the wind blow there?

Heart. It will as soon blow north and by south.—Marry, quotha! I hope, in heaven, I have a greater portion of grace, and I think I have baited too many of those traps to be caught in one myself.

Bell. Who the devil would have thee? unless 'twere an oyster-woman, to propagate young fry for Billingsgate:—thy talent will never recommend thee to anything of better quality.

Heart. My talent is chiefly that of speaking truth, which I don't expect should ever recommend me to people of quality. I thank heaven, I have very honestly purchased the hatred of all the great families in town.

Sharp. And you, in return of spleen, hate them. But could you hope to be received into the alliance of a noble family—

Heart. No, I hope I shall never merit that affliction—to be punished with a wife of birth—be a stag of the first head, and bear my horns aloft, like one of the supporters of my wife's coat. 'Sdeath, I would not be a cuckold to e'er an illustrious whore in England!

Bell. What, not to make your family, man! and provide for your children?

Sharp. For her children, you mean.

Heart. Ay, there you've nicked it—there's the devil upon devil.—O the pride and joy of heart 'twould be to me, to have my son and heir resemble such a duke!—to have a fleering coxcomb scoff and cry, Mr., your son's mighty like his Grace, has just his smile and air of's face. Then replies another, Methinks he has more of the Marquis of such a place about his nose and eyes, though he has my Lord What-d'ye-call's mouth to a tittle.—Then I, to put it off as unconcerned, come chuck the infant under the chin, force a smile, and cry, Ay, the boy takes after his mother's relations: when the devil and she knows, 'tis a little compound of the whole body of nobility.

Bell and Sharp. Ha! ha! ha!

Bell. Well, but, George, I have one question to ask you—

Heart. Pshaw! I have prattled away my time. I hope you are in no haste for an answer—for I shan't stay now. [*Looking on his watch.*

Bell. Nay, prithee, George—

Heart. No: besides my business, I see a fool coming this way. Adieu.

SCENE V.

BELLMOUR *and* SHARPER.

Bell. What does he mean? Oh, 'tis sir Joseph Wittol with his friend; but I see he has turned the corner, and goes another way.

Sharp. What in the name of wonder is it?

Bell. Why, a fool.

Sharp. 'Tis a tawdry outside.

Bell. And a very beggarly lining—yet he may be worth your acquaintance. A little of thy chemistry, Tom, may extract gold from that dirt.

Sharp. Say you so? faith, I am as poor as a chemist, and would be as industrious. But what was he that followed him? Is not he a dragon that watches those golden pippins?

Bell. Hang him, no, he a dragon! if he be, 'tis a very peaceful one; I can ensure his anger dormant; or should he seem to rouse, 'tis but well lashing him, and he will sleep like a top.

Sharp. Ay, is he of that kidney?

Bell. Yet is adored by that bigot sir Joseph Wittol, as the image of valour: he calls him his back, and indeed they are never asunder—yet last night, I know not by what mischance, the knight was alone, and had fallen into the hands of some night-walkers, who I suppose would have pillaged him; but I chanced to come by, and rescued him: though I believe he was heartily frightened, for as soon as ever he was loose he ran away, without staying to see who had helped him.

Sharp. Is that bully of his in the army?

Bell. No, but is a pretender, and wears the habit of a soldier; which now-a-days as often cloaks cowardice, as a black gown does atheism. You must know, he has been abroad—went purely to run away from a campaign; enriched himself with the plunder of a few oaths—and here vents 'em against the general; who slighting men of merit, and preferring only those of interest, has made him quit the service.

Sharp. Wherein, no doubt, he magnifies his own performance.

Bell. Speaks miracles, is the drum to his own praise—the only implement of a soldier he resembles; like that, being full of blustering noise and emptiness.

Sharp. And like that, of no use but to be beaten.

Bell. Right; but then the comparison breaks, for he will take a drubbing with as little noise as a pulpit-cushion.

Sharp. His name, and I have done?

Bell. Why, that, to pass it current too, he has gilded with a title: he is called Captain Bluffe.

Sharp. Well, I'll endeavour his acquaintance; you steer another course, are bound
For Love's Island; I for the golden coast:
May each succeed in what he wishes most!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Street.*

Sir Joseph Wittol, Sharper *following.*

Sharp. [*Aside.*] Sure that's he, and alone.

Sir Jo. [*Not perceiving* Sharper.] Um—ay, this, this is the very damned place; the inhuman cannibals, the bloody-minded villains would have butchered me last night: no doubt they would have flayed me alive, have sold my skin, and devoured &c.

Sharp. How's this?

Sir Jo. An it hadn't been for a civil gentleman as came by and frighted 'em away—but, agad, I durst not stay to give him thanks.

Sharp. This must be Bellmour he means.—Ha! I have a thought—

Sir Jo. Zooks, would the captain would come! the very remembrance makes me quake; agad, I shall never be reconciled to this place heartily.

Sharp. 'Tis but trying, and being where I am at worst. Now luck!—[*Aloud.*] Cursed fortune! this must be the place, this damned unlucky place!

Sir Jo. [*Aside.*] Agad, and so it is. Why, here has been more mischief done, I perceive.

Sharp. No, 'tis gone, 'tis lost,—ten thousand devils on that chance which drew me hither! Ay, here, just here, this spot to me is hell; nothing to be found but the despair of what I've lost. [*Looking about as in search.*

Sir Jo. Poor gentleman!—By the lord Harry I'll stay no longer, for I have found too—

Sharp. Ha! who's that has found? what have you found? restore it quickly, or by—

Sir Jo. Not I, sir, not I, as I've a soul to be saved, I have found nothing but what has been to my loss, as I may say, and as you were saying, sir.

Sharp. O your servant, sir, you are safe then it seems; 'tis an ill wind that blows nobody good. Well, you may rejoice over my ill fortune, since it paid the price of your ransom.

Sir Jo. I rejoice! agad, not I, sir; I'm very sorry for your loss, with all my heart, blood and guts, sir; and if you did but know me, you'd ne'er say I were so ill-natured.

Sharp. Know you! why, can you be so ungrateful to forget me?

Sir Jo. [*Aside.*] O lord, forget him!—[*Aloud.*] No, no, sir, I don't forget you—because I never saw your face before, agad;—ha! ha! ha!

Sharp. How! [*Angrily.*

Sir Jo. Stay, stay, sir, let me recollect.—[*Aside.*] He's a damned angry fellow—I believe I had better remember him, till I can get out of his sight; but out o'sight, out o'mind, agad.

Sharp. Methought the service I did you last night, sir, in preserving you from those ruffians, might have taken better root in your shallow memory.

Sir Jo. [*Aside.*] Gads-daggers-belts-blades and scabbards, this is the very gentleman! How shall I make him a return suitable to the greatness of his merit? I had a pretty thing to that purpose, if he ha'n't frighted it out of my memory.—[*Aloud.*] Hem, hem, sir, I most submissively implore your pardon for my transgression of ingratitude and omission; having my entire dependence, sir, upon the superfluity of your goodness, which, like an inundation, will, I hope, totally immerge the recollection of my error, and leave me floating in your sight upon the full-blown bladders of repentance, by the help of which I shall once more hope to swim into your favour. [*Bows.*

Sharp. So!—O, sir, I'm easily pacified, the acknowledgment of a gentleman—

Sir Jo. Acknowledgment! sir, I'm all over acknowledgment, and will not stick to show it in the greatest extremity, by night or by day, in sickness or in health, winter or summer; all seasons and occasions shall testify the reality and gratitude of your super-abundant humble servant, sir Joseph Wittol, knight.—Hem, hem.

Sharp. Sir Joseph Wittol!

Sir Jo. The same, sir, of Wittol Hall, in comitatu Bucks.

Sharp. Is it possible! then I am happy, to have obliged the mirror of knighthood, and pink of courtesy in the age. Let me embrace you.

Sir Jo. O Lord, sir!

Sharp. My loss I esteem as a trifle repaid with interest, since it has purchased me the friendship and acquaintance of the person in the world whose character I admire.

Sir Jo. You are only pleased to say so.—But pray, if I may be so bold, what is that loss you mention?

Sharp. O, term it no longer so, sir. In the scuffle, last night, I only dropped a bill of a hundred pounds, which, I confess, I came half despairing to recover, but thanks to my better fortune—

Sir Jo. You have found it, sir, then it seems; I profess I'm heartily glad.

Sharp. Sir, your humble servant—I don't question but you are; that you have so cheap an opportunity of expressing your gratitude and generosity; since the paying so trivial a sum will wholly acquit you and doubly engage me.

Sir Jo. [*Aside.*] What, a dickens, does he mean by a trivial sum?—[*Aloud.*] But ha'n't you found it, sir?

Sharp. No otherwise, I vow to gad, but in my hopes in you, sir.

Sir Jo. Humph.

Sharp. But that's sufficient—'twere injustice to doubt the honour of sir Joseph Wittol.

Sir Jo. O Lord, sir!

Sharp. You are above (I'm sure) a thought so low, to suffer me to lose what was ventured in your service; nay 'twas, in a manner, paid down for your deliverance; 'twas so much lent you; and you scorn, I'll say that for you—

Sir Jo. Nay, I'll say that for myself, (with your leave, sir,) I do scorn a dirty thing; but, agad, I'm a little out of pocket at present.

Sharp. Pshaw! you can't want a hundred pounds. Your word is sufficient anywhere; 'tis but borrowing so much dirt, you have large acres and can soon repay it. Money is but dirt, sir Joseph, mere dirt.

Sir Jo. But I profess 'tis a dirt I have washed

my hands of at present; I have laid it all out upon my back.

Sharp. Are you so extravagant in clothes, sir Joseph?

Sir Jo. Ha! ha! ha! a very good jest I profess, ha! ha! ha! a very good jest, and I did not know that I had said it, and that's a better jest than t'other. 'Tis a sign you and I ha'n't been long acquainted; you have lost a good jest for want of knowing me. I only mean a friend of mine whom I call my back; he sticks as close to me, and follows me through all dangers: he is indeed back, breast, and head-piece as it were to me. Agad, he's a brave fellow—pauh! I am quite another thing when I am with him; I don't fear the devil (bless us!) almost, if he be by. Ah, had he been with me last night—

Sharp. If he had, sir, what then? he could have done no more, nor perhaps have suffered so much. Had he a hundred pounds to lose? [*Angrily.*

Sir Jo. O Lord, sir, by no means!—but I might have saved a hundred pounds—I meant innocently, as I hope to be saved, sir.—A damn'd hot fellow! —Only, as I was saying, I let him have all my ready money to redeem his great sword from limbo. But, sir, I have a letter of credit to alderman Fondlewife, as far as two hundred pounds, and this afternoon you shall see I am a person, such a one as you would wish to have met with.

Sharp. [*Aside.*] That you are, I'll be sworn.—[*Aloud.*] Why that's great, and like yourself.

SCENE II.

Sir Joseph Wittol, Sharper, *and* Captain Bluffe.

Sir Jo. O, here a'comes.—Ah, my Hector of Troy, welcome my bully, my back! agad, my heart has gone a pit-pat for thee.

Bluffe. How now, my young knight! not for fear I hope; he that knows me must be a stranger to fear.

Sir Jo. Nay, agad, I hate fear ever since I had like to have died of a fright—but—

Bluffe. But! look you here, boy, here's your antidote, here's your jesuit's powder for a shaking fit.—But who hast thou got with thee? is he of mettle? [*Laying his hand on his sword.*

Sir Jo. Ay, bully, a devilish smart fellow; a' will fight like a cock.

Bluffe. Say you so? then I honour him.—But has he been abroad? for every cock will fight upon his own dunghill.

Sir Jo. I don't know, but I'll present you.

Bluffe. I'll recommend myself.—Sir, I honour you; I understand you love fighting, I reverence a man that loves fighting, sir, I kiss your hilts.

Sharp. Sir, your servant, but you are misinformed; for unless it be to serve my particular friend, as sir Joseph here, my country, or my religion, or in some very justifiable cause, I'm not for it.

Bluffe. O Lord, I beg your pardon, sir! I find you are not of my palate, you can't relish a dish of fighting without sweet sauce. Now I think—

Fighting, for fighting sake's sufficient cause;
Fighting, to me's religion and the laws.

Sir Jo. Ah, well said, my hero!—Was not that great, sir? By the Lord Harry he says true, fighting is meat, drink, and cloth to him.—But, back, this gentleman is one of the best friends I have in the world, and saved my life last night, you know I told you.

Bluffe. Ay, then I honour him again.—Sir, may I crave your name?

Sharp. Ay, sir, my name's Sharper.

Sir Jo. Pray, Mr. Sharper, embrace my back—very well. By the Lord Harry, Mr. Sharper, he's as brave a fellow as Cannibal: are not you bully-back?

Sharp. Hannibal, I believe you mean, sir Joseph.

Bluffe. Undoubtedly he did, sir.—Faith, Hannibal was a very pretty fellow; but, sir Joseph, comparisons are odious; Hannibal was a very pretty fellow in those days, it must be granted; but alas, sir, were he alive now, he would be nothing, nothing in the earth.

Sharp. How, sir! I make a doubt if there be at this day a greater general breathing.

Bluffe. Oh, excuse me, sir; have you served abroad, sir?

Sharp. Not I really, sir.

Bluffe. Oh, I thought so.—Why, then, you can know nothing, sir; I am afraid you scarce know the history of the late war in Flanders, with all its particulars.

Sharp. Not I, sir, no more than public letters or gazettes tell us.

Bluffe. Gazette! why there again now—why, sir, there are not three words of truth the year round put into the gazette—I'll tell you a strange thing now as to that.—You must know, sir, I was resident in Flanders the last campaign, had a small post there, but no matter for that. Perhaps, sir, there was scarce anything of moment done but an humble servant of yours, that shall be nameless, was an eye-witness of—I won't say had the greatest share in't; though I might say that too, since I name nobody, you know.—Well, Mr. Sharper, would you think it? in all this time, as I hope for a truncheon, this rascally gazette-writer never so much as once mentioned me—not once, by the wars!—took no more notice than as if Nol. Bluffe had not been in the land of the living!

Sharp. Strange!

Sir Jo. Yet, by the Lord Harry, 'tis true, Mr. Sharper, for I went every day to coffee-houses to read the gazette myself.

Bluffe. Ay, ay, no matter.—You see, Mr. Sharper, after all I am content to retire—live a private person—Scipio and others have done it.

Sharp. Impudent rogue! [*Aside.*

Sir Jo. Ay, this damned modesty of yours—agad, if he would put in for't he might be made general himself yet.

Bluffe. O fy, no, sir Joseph!—you know I hate this.

Sir Jo. Let me but tell Mr. Sharper a little, how you eat fire once out of the mouth of a cannon. —Agad he did; those impenetrable whiskers of his have confronted flames.

Bluffe. Death, what do you mean, sir Joseph?

Sir Jo. Look you now, I tell you he's so modest he'll own nothing.

Bluffe. Pish! you have put me out, I have forgot what I was about. Pray hold your tongue, and give me leave. [*Angrily.*

Sir Jo. I am dumb.

Bluffe. This sword, I think, I was telling you of,

Mr. Sharper,—this sword I'll maintain to be the best divine, anatomist, lawyer, or casuist in Europe; it shall decide a controversy or split a cause.

Sir Jo. Nay, now I must speak; it will split a hair, by the Lord Harry, I have seen it.

Bluffe. Zounds, sir, it's a lie! you have not seen it, nor shan't see it; sir, I say you can't see; what d'ye say to that now?

Sir Jo. I am blind.

Bluffe. Death, had any other man interrupted me—

Sir Jo. Good Mr. Sharper, speak to him, I dare not look that way.

Sharp. Captain, sir Joseph's penitent.

Bluffe. O I am calm, sir, calm as a discharged culverin—but 'twas indiscreet, when you know what will provoke me.—Nay, come, sir Joseph, you know my heat's soon over.

Sir Jo. Well, I am a fool sometimes—but I'm sorry.

Bluffe. Enough.

Sir Jo. Come, we'll go take a glass to drown animosities.—Mr. Sharper, will you partake?

Sharp. I wait on you, sir; nay, pray captain, —you are sir Joseph's back.

SCENE III.—ARAMINTA'S *Apartment.*

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, *and* BETTY.

Belin. Ah, nay, dear—prithee good, dear, sweet cousin, no more. Oh gad, I swear you'd make one sick to hear you!

Aram. Bless me, what have I said to move you thus?

Belin. Oh, you have raved, talked idly, and all in commendation of that filthy, awkward, two-legged creature man! You don't know what you've said, your fever has transported you.

Aram. If love be the fever which you mean, kind heaven avert the cure! Let me have oil to feed that flame, and never let it be extinct, till I myself am ashes!

Belin. There was a whine!—O gad, I hate your horrid fancy! This love is the devil, and sure to be in love is to be possessed.—'Tis in the head, the heart, the blood, the—all over.—O gad, you are quite spoiled!—I shall loathe the sight of mankind for your sake.

Aram. Fy, this is gross affectation! A little of Bellmour's company would change the scene.

Belin. Filthy fellow! I wonder, cousin—

Aram. I wonder, cousin, you should imagine I don't perceive you love him.

Belin. Oh, I love your hideous fancy! Ha! ha! ha! love a man!

Aram. Love a man! yes, you would not love a beast?

Belin. Of all beasts not an ass—which is so like your Vainlove!—Lard, I have seen an ass look so chagrin, ha! ha! ha! (you must pardon me, I can't help laughing) that an absolute lover would have concluded the poor creature to have had darts, and flames, and altars, and all that, in his breast. Araminta, come, I'll talk seriously to you now; could you but see with my eyes, the buffoonery of one scene of address, a lover, set out with all his equipage and appurtenances; O gad! sure you would—But you play the game, and consequently can't see the miscarriages obvious to every stander by.

Aram. Yes, yes, I can see something near it, when you and Bellmour meet. You don't know that you dreamed of Bellmour last night, and called him aloud in your sleep.

Belin. Pish! I can't help dreaming of the devil sometimes; would you from thence infer I love him?

Aram. But that's not all; you caught me in your arms when you named him, and pressed me to your bosom.—Sure, if I had not pinched you till you awaked, you had stifled me with kisses.

Belin. O barbarous aspersion!

Aram. No aspersion, cousin, we are alone.—Nay, I can tell you more.

Belin. I deny it all.

Aram. What, before you hear it?

Belin. My denial is premeditated like your malice.—Lard, cousin, you talk oddly!—Whatever the matter is, O my Sol, I'm afraid you'll follow evil courses.

Aram. Ha! ha! ha! this is pleasant.

Belin. You may laugh, but—

Aram. Ha! ha! ha!

Belin. You may think the malicious grin becomes you.—The devil take Bellmour! why do you tell me of him?

Aram. Oh is it come out! —now you are angry, I am sure you love him. I tell nobody else, cousin; I have not betrayed you yet.

Belin. Prithee, tell it all the world; it's false.

Aram. Come, then, kiss and friends.

Belin. Pish!

Aram. Prithee, don't be so peevish.

Belin. Prithee, don't be so impertinent.—Betty!

Aram. Ha! ha! ha!

Betty. Did your ladyship call, madam?

Belin. Get my hoods and tippet, and bid the footman call a chair. [*Exit* BETTY.

Aram. I hope you are not going out in dudgeon, cousin?

SCENE IV.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, *and* PACE.

Pace. Madam, there are—

Belin. Is there a chair?

Pace. No, madam, there are Mr. Bellmour and Mr. Vainlove to wait upon your ladyship.

Aram. Are they below?

Pace. No, madam, they sent before, to know if you were at home.

Belin. The visit's to you, cousin; I suppose I am at my liberty.

Aram. [*To* PACE.] Be ready to show 'em up.

SCENE V.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, *and* BETTY.

Aram. I can't tell, cousin, I believe we are equally concerned; but if you continue your humour, it won't be very entertaining.—[*Aside.*] I know she'd fain be persuaded to stay.

Belin. I shall oblige you in leaving you to the full and free enjoyment of that conversation you

admire.—Let me see; hold the glass.—Lard, I look wretchedly to-day!

Aram. Betty, why don't you help my cousin? [*Putting on her hoods.*

Belin. Hold off your fists! and see that he gets a chair with a high roof, or a very low seat.—Stay, come back here, you Mrs. Fidget—you are so ready to go to the footman. Here, take 'em all again, my mind's changed, I won't go.

SCENE VI.

ARAMINTA *and* BELINDA.

Aram. [*Aside.*] So, this I expected.—[*Aloud.*] You won't oblige me then, cousin, and let me have all the company to myself?

Belin. No; upon deliberation, I have too much charity to trust you to yourself. The devil watches all opportunities; and, in this favourable disposition of your mind, heaven knows how far you may be tempted: I am tender of your reputation.

Aram. I am obliged to you. But who's malicious now, Belinda?

Belin. Not I; witness my heart, I stay out of pure affection.

Aram. In my conscience, I believe you.

SCENE VII.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, BELLMOUR, *and* PACE.

Bell. So, fortune be praised!—To find you both within, ladies, is—

Aram. No miracle, I hope.

Bell. Not o'your side, madam, I confess.—But my tyrant there and I are two buckets that can never come together.

Belin. Nor are ever like.—Yet we often meet and clash.

Bell. How, never like! marry, Hymen forbid! But this it is to run so extravagantly in debt; I have laid out such a world of love in your service, that you think you can never be able to pay me all; so shun me for the same reason that you would a dun.

Belin. Ay, on my conscience, and the most impertinent and troublesome of duns.—A dun for money will be quiet, when he sees his debtor has not wherewithal; but a dun for love is an eternal torment that never rests.

Bell. Till he has created love where there was none, and then gets it for his pains.—For importunity in love, like importunity at court, first creates its own interest, and then pursues it for the favour.

Aram. Favours that are got by impudence and importunity, are like discoveries from the rack, when the afflicted person, for his ease, sometimes confesses secrets his heart knows nothing of.

Vain. I should rather think favours, so gained, to be due rewards to indefatigable devotion.—For as Love is a deity, he must be served by prayer.

Belin. O gad, would you would all pray to Love then, and let us alone!

Vain. You are the temples of Love, and 'tis through you our devotion must be conveyed.

Aram. Rather poor silly idols of your own making, which, upon the least displeasure, you forsake, and set up new.—Every man, now, changes his mistress and his religion as his humour varies or his interest.

Vain. O madam!—

Aram. Nay, come, I find we are growing serious, and then we are in great danger of being dull.—If my music-master be not gone, I'll entertain you with a new song, which comes pretty near my own opinion of love and your sex.—Who's there? Is Mr. Gavot gone? [*Calls.*

Pace. Only to the next door, madam; I'll call him.

SCENE VIII.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, *and* BELLMOUR.

Bell. Why, you won't hear me with patience.

Aram. What's the matter, cousin?

Bell. Nothing, madam, only—

Belin. Prithee, hold thy tongue!—Lard, he has so pestered me with flames and stuff, I think I shan't endure the sight of a fire this twelvemonth!

Bell. Yet all can't melt that cruel frozen heart.

Belin. O gad, I hate your hideous fancy! you said that once before.—If you must talk impertinently, for heaven's sake let it be with variety; don't come always, like the devil, wrapped in flames.—I'll not hear a sentence more, that begins with an *I burn*—or an *I beseech you, madam.*

Bell. But tell me how you would be adored; I am very tractable.

Belin. Then know, I would be adored in silence.

Bell. Humph! I thought so, that you might have all the talk to yourself. You had better let me speak; for if my thoughts fly to any pitch, I shall make villanous signs.

Belin. What will you get by that? to make such signs as I won't understand.

Bell. Ay, but if I am tongue-tied, I must have all my actions free to—quicken your apprehension—and, egad, let me tell you, my most prevailing argument is expressed in dumb show.

SCENE IX.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, BELLMOUR, *and* GAVOT.

Aram. O I am glad, we shall have a song to divert the discourse.—[*To* GAVOT.] Pray oblige us with the last new song.

GAVOT *sings.*

Thus, to a ripe consenting maid,
Poor, old, repenting Delia said:—
Would you long preserve your lover?
　Would you still his goddess reign?
Never let him all discover,
　Never let him much obtain.

Men will admire, adore, and die,
While wishing at your feet they lie:
But admitting their embraces
　Wakes 'em from the golden dream;
Nothing's new besides our faces,
　Every woman is the same.

Aram. So, how d'ye like the song, gentlemen?

Bell. O, very well performed; but I don't much admire the words.

Aram. I expected it—there's too much truth in 'em. If Mr. Gavot will walk with us in the garden, we'll have it once again; you may like it better at second hearing. You'll bring my cousin?

Bell. Faith, madam, I dare not speak to her, but I'll make signs.

[*Addresses* BELINDA *in dumb show.*

Belin. O foh! your dumb rhetoric is more ridiculous than your talking impertinence; as an ape is a much more troublesome animal than a parrot.

Aram. Ay, cousin, and 'tis a sign the creatures mimic nature well; for there are few men but do more silly things than they say.

Bell. Well, I find my apishness has paid the ransom for my speech, and set it at liberty; though I confess I could be well enough pleased to drive on a love-bargain in that silent manner: 'twould save a man a world of lying and swearing at the year's end. Besides, I have had a little experience, that brings to mind—

When wit and reason both have fail'd to move;
Kind looks and actions (from success) do prove,
Even silence may be eloquent in love. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Street before* SILVIA'S *Lodging.*

SILVIA *and* LUCY.

Silv. Will he not come then?

Lucy. Yes, yes; come! I warrant him, if you will go in and be ready to receive him.

Silv. Why, did you not tell me?—whom mean you?

Lucy. Whom you should mean, Heartwell.

Silv. Senseless creature! I meant my Vainlove.

Lucy. You may as soon hope to recover your own maidenhead as his love. Therefore, e'en set your heart at rest; and in the name of opportunity mind your own business. Strike Heartwell home, before the bait's worn off the hook. Age will come. He nibbled fairly yesterday, and no doubt will be eager enough to-day to swallow the temptation.

Silv. Well, since there's no remedy—Yet tell me, for I would know, though to the anguish of my soul, how did he refuse? Tell me—how did he receive my letter? in anger or in scorn?

Lucy. Neither; but what was ten times worse, with damned senseless indifference. By this light, I could have spit in his face! Received it! why he received it as I would one of your lovers that should come empty-handed; as a court lord does his mercer's bill, or a begging dedication—he received it as if 't had been a letter from his wife.

Silv. What, did he not read it?

Lucy. Hum'd it over, gave you his respects, and said he would take time to peruse it—but then he was in haste.

Silv. Respects, and peruse it! He's gone, and Araminta has bewitched him from me! O how the name of rival fires my blood! I could curse 'em both; eternal jealousy attend her love, and disappointment meet his! Oh that I could revenge the torment he has caused! Methinks I feel the woman strong within me, and vengeance kindles in the room of love.

Lucy. I have that in my head may make mischief.

Silv. How, dear Lucy?

Lucy. You know Araminta's dissembled coyness has won, and keeps him hers—

Silv. Could we persuade him that she loves another—

Lucy. No, you're out; could we persuade him that she dotes on him, himself—contrive a kind letter as from her, 'twould disgust his nicety, and take away his stomach.

Silv. Impossible, 'twill never take.

Lucy. Trouble not your head. Let me alone. I will inform myself of what passed between 'em to-day, and about it straight.—Hold, I'm mistaken or that's Heartwell who stands talking at the corner—'tis he. Go, get you in, madam, receive him pleasantly, dress up your face in innocence and smiles, and dissemble the very want of dissimulation.—You know what will take him.

Silv. 'Tis as hard to counterfeit love as it is to conceal it; but I'll do my weak endeavour, though I fear I have not art.

Lucy. Hang art, madam! and trust to nature for dissembling.

Man was by nature woman's cully made;
We never are but by ourselves betray'd.

SCENE II.

HEARTWELL, VAINLOVE *and* BELLMOUR *following.*

Bell. Hist, hist, is not that Heartwell going to Silvia?

Vain. He's talking to himself, I think: prithee let's try if we can hear him.

Heart. Why, whither in the devil's name am I a-going now? Hum—let me think—is not this Silvia's house, the cave of that enchantress, and which consequently I ought to shun as I would infection? To enter here, is to put on the envenomed shirt, to run into the embraces of a fever, and in some raving fit be led to plunge myself into that more consuming fire, a woman's arms. Ha! well recollected, I will recover my reason, and be gone.

Bell. Now, Venus forbid!

Vain. Hush!

Heart. Well, why do you not move? Feet, do your office—not one inch; no, foregad, I'm caught! There stands my north, and thither my needle points.—Now could I curse myself, yet cannot repent. O thou delicious, damned, dear, destructive woman! 'Sdeath, how the young fellows will hoot me! I shall be the jest of the town. Nay in two days I expect to be chronicled in ditty, and sung in woeful ballad, to the tune of the *Superannuated Maiden's Comfort*, or the *Bachelor's Fall*; and upon the third, I shall be hanged in effigy, pasted up for the exemplary ornament of necessary-houses and cobblers' stalls. Death, I can't think on't!—I'll run into the danger to lose the apprehension.

SCENE III.

BELLMOUR *and* VAINLOVE.

Bell. A very certain remedy, *probatum est.*—Ha! ha! ha! poor George, thou art i' th' right, thou hast sold thyself to laughter; the ill-natured town will find the jest just where thou hast lost it. Ha! ha! how a' struggled, like an old lawyer between two fees!

Vain. Or a young wench, between pleasure and reputation.

Bell. Or as you did to-day, when half afraid you snatched a kiss from Araminta.

Vain. She has made a quarrel on't.

Bell. Pauh! women are only angry at such offences, to have the pleasure of forgiving 'em.

Vain. And I love to have the pleasure of making my peace.—I should not esteem a pardon if too easily won.

Bell. Thou dost not know what thou wouldst be at; whether thou wouldst have her angry or pleased. Couldst thou be content to marry Araminta?

Vain. Could you be content to go to heaven?

Bell. Hum, not immediately, in my conscience not heartily. I'd do a little more good in my generation first, in order to deserve it.

Vain. Nor I to marry Araminta till I merit her.

Bell. But how the devil dost thou expect to get her if she never yield?

Vain. That's true; but I would—

Bell. Marry her without her consent; thou'rt a riddle beyond woman.

SCENE IV.

BELLMOUR, VAINLOVE, *and* SETTER.

Bell. Trusty Setter, what tidings? how goes the project?

Set. As all lewd projects do, sir, where the devil prevents our endeavours with success.

Bell. A good hearing, Setter.

Vain. Well, I'll leave you with your engineer. [*Exit.*

Bell. And hast thou provided necessaries?

Set. All, all, sir; the large sanctified hat, and the little precise band, with a swinging long-spiritual cloak, to cover carnal knavery—not forgetting the black patch, which Tribulation Spintext wears, as I'm informed, upon one eye, as a penal mourning for the ogling offences of his youth; and some say, with that eye he first discovered the frailty of his wife.

Bell. Well, in this fanatic father's habit will I confess Lætitia.

Set. Rather prepare her for confession, sir, by helping her to sin.

Bell. Be at your master's lodging in the evening, I shall use the robes.

SCENE V.

SETTER.

I shall, sir.—I wonder to which of these two gentlemen I do most properly appertain?—The one uses me as his attendant, the other (being the better acquainted with my parts) employs me as a pimp; why that's much the more honourable employment—by all means. I follow one as my master, t'other follows me as his conductor.

SCENE VI.

SETTER *and* LUCY.

Lucy. [*Aside.*] There's the hang-dog his man. I had a power over him in the reign of my mistress; but he is too true a valet-de-chambre not to affect his master's faults; and consequently is revolted from his allegiance.

Set. [*Not perceiving* LUCY.] Undoubtedly 'tis impossible to be a pimp and not a man of parts. That is, without being politic, diligent, secret, wary and so forth:—and to all this, valiant as Hercules—that is, passively valiant and actively obedient. Ah, Setter, what a treasure is here lost for want of being known!

Lucy. [*Aside.*] Here's some villany a-foot, he's so thoughtful; maybe I may discover something in my mask.—[*Aloud.*] Worthy sir, a word with you. [*Puts on her mask.*

Set. Why, if I were known, I might come to be a great man—

Lucy. Not to interrupt your meditation—

Set. And I should not be the first that has procured his greatness by pimping.

Lucy. Now poverty and the pox light upon thee, for a contemplative pimp!

Set. Ha! what art, who thus maliciously hast awakened me from my dream of glory? Speak, thou vile disturber—

Lucy. Of thy most vile cogitations.—Thou poor, conceited wretch, how wert thou valuing thyself upon thy master's employment? For he's the head-pimp to Mr. Bellmour.

Set. Good words, damsel, or I shall—but how dost thou know my master or me?

Lucy. Yes, I know both master and man to be—

Set. To be men perhaps; nay, faith, like enough: I often march in the rear of my master, and enter the breaches which he has made.

Lucy. Ay, the breach of faith, which he has begun: thou traitor to thy lawful princess!

Set. Why, how now! prithee, who art? Lay by that worldly face, and produce your natural vizor.

Lucy. No, sirrah, I'll keep it on to abuse thee, and leave thee without hopes of revenge.

Set. Oh! I begin to smoke ye: thou art some forsaken Abigail we have dallied with heretofore, and art come to tickle thy imagination with remembrance of iniquity past.

Lucy. No, thou pitiful flatterer of thy master's imperfections! thou maukin, made up of the shreds and parings of his superfluous fopperies!

Set. Thou art thy mistress's foul self, composed of her sullied iniquities and clothing.

Lucy. Hang thee, beggar's cur!—Thy master is but a mumper in love; lies canting at the gate, but never dares presume to enter the house.

Set. Thou art the wicket to thy mistress's gate, to be opened for all comers. In fine, thou art the high-road to thy mistress.

Lucy. Beast! filthy toad! I can hold no longer: look and tremble. [*Unmasks.*

Set. How, Mrs. Lucy!

Lucy. I wonder thou hast the impudence to look me in the face.

Set. Adsbud, who's in fault, mistress of mine? who flung the first stone? who undervalued my function? and who the devil could know you by instinct?

Lucy. You could know my office by instinct, and be hanged! which you have slandered most abominably. It vexes me not what you said of my person; but that my innocent calling should be exposed and scandalised—I cannot bear it. [*Pretends to cry.*

Set. Nay, faith, Lucy, I'm sorry; I'll own myself to blame, though we were both in fault as to our offices.—Come, I'll make you any reparation.

Lucy. Swear.

Set. I do swear to the utmost of my power.

Lucy. To be brief then:—What is the reason your master did not appear to-day according to the summons I brought him?

Set. To answer you as briefly:—He has a cause to be tried in another court.

Lucy. Come, tell me in plain terms, how forward he is with Araminta.

Set. Too forward to be turned back; though he's a little in disgrace at present about a kiss which he forced. You and I can kiss, Lucy, without all that.

Lucy. Stand off!—He's a precious jewel!

Set. And therefore you'd have him to set in your lady's locket.

Lucy. Where is he now?

Set. He'll be in the Piazza presently.

Lucy. Remember to-day's behaviour—let me see you with a penitent face.

Set. What, no token of amity, Lucy? you and I don't use to part with dry lips.

Lucy. No, no, avaunt!—I'll not be slabbered and kissed now—I'm not i'th' humour.

Set. I'll not quit you so:—I'll follow and put you into the humour.

SCENE VII.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOL *and* BLUFFE.

Bluffe. And so out of your unwonted generosity—

Sir Jo. And good-nature, back; I am good-natured, and I can't help it.

Bluffe. You have given him a note upon Fondlewife for a hundred pounds.

Sir Jo. Ay, ay, poor fellow, he ventured fair for't.

Bluffe. You have disobliged me in it, for I have occasion for the money, and if you would look me in the face again and live, go, and force him to redeliver you the note. Go, and bring it me hither: I'll stay here for you.

Sir Jo. You may stay 'till the day of judgment then: by the Lord Harry, I know better things than to be run through the guts for a hundred pounds.—Why, I gave that hundred pounds for being saved, and d'ye think, an there were no danger, I'll be so ungrateful to take it from the gentleman again?

Bluffe. Well, go to him from me.—Tell him, I say he must refund, or Bilbo's the word, and slaughter will ensue:—if he refuse, tell him—but whisper that—tell him—I'll pink his soul—but whisper that softly to him.

Sir Jo. So softly that he shall never hear on't, I warrant you.—Why, what a devil's the matter, bully, are you mad? or d'ye think I'm mad? Agad, for my part, I don't love to be the messenger of ill news; 'tis an ungrateful office—so tell him yourself.

Bluffe. By these hilts, I believe he frightened you into this composition! I believe you gave it him out of fear, pure, paltry fear—confess.

Sir Jo. No, no, hang't I was not afraid neither—though I confess he did in a manner snap me up—yet I can't say that it was altogether out of fear, but partly to prevent mischief—for he was a devilish choleric fellow: and if my choler had been up too, agad, there would have been mischief done, that's flat. And yet I believe if you had been by, I would as soon have let him a' had a hundred of my teeth. Adsheart, if he should come just now when I'm angry, I'd tell him—mum.

SCENE VIII.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOL, BLUFFE, BELLMOUR, *and* SHARPER.

Bell. Thou'rt a lucky rogue; there's your benefactor; you ought to return him thanks now you have received the favour.

Sharp. Sir Joseph, your note was accepted, and the money paid at sight: I'm come to return my thanks.

Sir Jo. They won't be accepted so readily as the bill, sir.

Bell. I doubt the knight repents, Tom. He looks like the Knight of the Sorrowful Face.

Sharp. This is a double generosity:—do me a kindness, and refuse my thanks.—But I hope you are not offended that I offered 'em?

Sir Jo. Maybe I am, sir, maybe I am not, sir, maybe I am both, sir; what then? I hope I may be offended, without any offence to you, sir?

Sharp. Heyday! Captain, what's the matter? you can tell.

Bluffe. Mr. Sharper, the matter is plain; sir Joseph has found out your trick, and does not care to be put upon, being a man of honour.

Sharp. Trick, sir?

Sir Jo. Ay, trick, sir, and won't be put upon, sir, being a man of honour, sir, and so, sir—

Sharp. Harkee, sir Joseph, a word with ye.—In consideration of some favours lately received, I would not have you draw yourself into a premunire, by trusting to that sign of a man there—that potgun charged with wind.

Sir Jo. O Lord, O Lord, captain, come justify yourself!—I'll give him the lie if you'll stand to it.

Sharp. Nay, then, I'll be beforehand with you; take that, oaf. [*Cuffs him.*

Sir Jo. Captain, will you see this? won't you pink his soul?

Bluffe. Hush! 'tis not so convenient now—I shall find a time.

Sharp. What, do you mutter about a time, rascal?—You were the incendiary:—there's to put you in mind of your time—a memorandum. [*Kicks him.*

Bluffe. Oh, this is your time, sir, you had best make use on't.

Sharp. Egad, and so I will: there's again for you. [*Kicks him.*

Bluffe. You are obliging, sir, but this is too public a place to thank you in: but, in your ear, you are to be seen again.

Sharp. Ay, thou inimitable coward, and to be felt:—as for example. [*Kicks him.*

Bell. Ha! ha! ha! prithee come away; 'tis scandalous to kick this puppy, unless a man were cold, and had no other way to get himself a heat.

SCENE IX.

Sir Joseph Wittol *and* Bluffe.

Bluffe. Very well—very fine—but 'tis no matter. —Is not this fine, sir Joseph?

Sir Jo. Indifferent, agad, in my opinion very indifferent.—I'd rather go plain all my life than wear such finery.

Bluffe. Death and hell! to be affronted thus! I'll die before I'll suffer it. [*Draws.*

Sir Jo. [*Aside.*] O Lord, his anger was not raised before!—[*Aloud.*] Nay, dear captain, don't be in a passion now he's gone.—Put up, put up, dear back, 'tis your sir Joseph begs; come, let me kiss thee; so, so, put up, put up.

Bluffe. By heaven, 'tis not to be put up!

Sir Jo. What, bully?

Bluffe. The affront.

Sir Jo. No, agad, no more 'tis, for that's put up already:—thy sword I mean.

Bluffe. Well, sir Joseph, at your entreaty.—[*Puts up his sword.*] But were not you, my friend, abused and cuffed and kicked?

Sir Jo. Ay, ay, so were you too; no matter, 'tis past.

Bluffe. By the immortal thunder of great guns, 'tis false!—he sucks not vital air who dares affirm it to this face. [*Looks big.*

Sir Jo. To that face I grant you, captain: no, no, I grant you, not to that face, by the Lord Harry, if you had put on your fighting face before, you had done his business; he durst as soon have kissed you, as kicked you to your face; but a man can no more help what's done behind his back, than what's said. Come, we'll think no more of what's past.

Bluffe. I'll call a council of war within to consider of my revenge to come.

SCENE X.—*Silvia's Apartment.*

Heartwell *and* Silvia.

SONG.

As Amoret and Thyrsis lay
Melting the hours in gentle play,
Joining faces, mingling kisses,
And exchanging harmless blisses;
He trembling cried with eager haste:—
"O, let me feed, as well as taste;
I die, if I'm not wholly blest!"

After the song a Dance of Antics.

Silv. Indeed, it is very fine, I could look upon 'em all day.

Heart. Well, has this prevailed for me, and will you look upon me?

Silv. If you could sing and dance so, I should love to look upon you too.

Heart. Why 'twas I sung and danced; I gave music to the voice, and life to their measures.—Look you here, Silvia, [*Pulling out a purse and chinking it*] here are songs and dances, poetry and music. Hark! how sweetly one guinea rhymes to another, and how they dance to the music of their own chink. This buys all the t'other, and this thou shalt have; this, and all that I am worth, for the purchase of thy love.—Say, is it mine then, ha? Speak, siren!—[*Aside.*] Oons, why do I look on her? Yet I must.—[*Aloud.*] Speak, dear angel! devil! saint! witch! do not rack me with suspense.

Silv. Nay, don't stare at me so; you make me blush, I cannot look.

Heart. [*Aside.*] O manhood! where art thou? What am I come to? a woman's toy, at these years! Death, a bearded baby for a girl to dandle! O dotage, dotage! That ever that noble passion, lust, should ebb to this degree!—No reflux of vigorous blood; but milky love supplies the empty channels, and prompts me to the softness of a child—a mere infant, and would suck.—[*Aloud.*] Can you love me, Silvia? speak.

Silv. I dare not speak till I believe you, and indeed I'm afraid to believe you yet.

Heart. [*Aside.*] Death, how her innocence torments and pleases me!—[*Aloud.*] Lying, child, is indeed the art of love; and men are generally masters in it: but I'm so newly entered, you cannot distrust me of any skill in the treacherous mystery. Now, by my soul, I cannot lie, though it were to serve a friend or gain a mistress.

Silv. Must you lie then, if you say you love me?

Heart. No, no, dear ignorance! thou beauteous changeling! I tell thee I do love thee, and tell it for a truth, a naked truth, which I am ashamed to discover.

Silv. But love, they say, is a tender thing, that will smooth frowns, and make calm an angry face; will soften a rugged temper, and make ill-humoured people good: you look ready to fright one, and talk as if your passion were not love, but anger.

Heart. 'Tis both, for I am angry with myself when I am pleased with you. And a pox upon me for loving thee so well!—yet I must on. 'Tis a bearded arrow, and will more easily be thrust forward than drawn back.

Silv. Indeed if I were well assured you loved; but how can I be well assured?

Heart. Take the symptoms, and ask all the tyrants of thy sex, if their fools are not known by this party-coloured livery.—I am melancholic when thou art absent, look like an ass when thou art present, wake for thee when I should sleep; and even dream of thee when I am awake; sigh much, drink little, eat less, court solitude, am grown very entertaining to myself, and (as I am informed) very troublesome to everybody else. If this be not love, it is madness, and then it is pardonable. Nay, yet a more certain sign than all this, I give thee my money.

Silv. Ay, but that is no sign; for they say gentlemen will give money to any naughty woman to come to bed to them. O gemini! I hope you don't mean so, for I won't be a whore.

Heart. The more is the pity. [*Aside.*

Silv. Nay, if you would marry me, you should not come to bed to me, you have such a beard, and would so prickle one. But do you intend to marry me?

Heart. [*Aside.*] That a fool should ask such a malicious question! Death, I shall be drawn in before I know where I am!—However, I find I am pretty sure of her consent, if I am put to it.—[*Aloud.*] Marry you! no, no, I'll love you.

Silv. Nay, but if you love me, you must marry me; what, don't I know my father loved my mother, and was married to her?

Heart. Ay, ay, in old days people married where they loved; but that fashion is changed, child.

Silv. Never tell me that, I know it is not changed by myself; for I love you and would marry you.

Heart. I'll have my beard shaved, it shan't hurt thee, and we'll go to bed.

Silv. No, no, I'm not such a fool neither but I can keep myself honest. Here, I won't keep anything that's yours; I hate you now, [*Throws the purse*] and I'll never see you again, 'cause you'd have me be naught. [*Going.*

Heart. [*Aside.*] Damn her! let her go, and a good riddance; yet so much tenderness and beauty and honesty together is a jewel.—[*Aloud.*] Stay, Silvia!—[*Aside.*] But then to marry—why, every man plays the fool once in his life; but to marry is playing the fool all one's life long.

Silv. What did you call me for?

Heart. I'll give thee all I have; and thou shalt live with me in everything so like my wife, the world shall believe it; nay, thou shalt think so thyself, only let me not think so.

Silv. No, I'll die before I'll be your whore, as well as I love you!

Heart. [*Aside.*] A woman, and ignorant, may be honest, when 'tis out of obstinacy and contradiction; but, 'sdeath! it is but a may-be, and upon scurvy terms.—[*Aloud.*] Well, farewell then; if I can get out of sight, I may get the better of myself.

Silv. Well, good bye. [*Pretends to weep.*

Heart. Ha! nay come, we'll kiss at parting.—[*Aside.*] By heaven, her kiss is sweeter than liberty!—[*Aloud.*] I will marry thee; there thou hast done't. All my resolves melted in that kiss—one more.

Silv. But when?

Heart. I'm impatient till it be done; I will not give myself liberty to think, lest I should cool.—I will about a licence straight; in the evening expect me.—One kiss more to confirm me mad; so. [*Exit.*

Silv. Ha! ha! ha! an old fox trapped!

SCENE XI.

SILVIA *and* LUCY.

Silv. Bless me! you frighted me, I thought he had been come again, and had heard me.

Lucy. Lord, madam, I met your lover in as much haste as if he had been going for a midwife!

Silv. He's going for a parson, girl, the forerunner of a midwife, some nine months hence.—Well, I find dissembling to our sex is as natural as swimming to a negro; we may depend upon our skill to save us at a plunge, though till then we never make the experiment.—But how hast thou succeeded?

Lucy. As you would wish; since there is no reclaiming Vainlove. I have found out a pique she has taken at him, and have framed a letter that makes her sue for reconciliation first. I know that will do—walk in and I'll show it you. Come, madam, you're like to have a happy time on't; both your love and anger satisfied! all that can charm our sex conspire to please you.

That woman sure enjoys a blessed night,
Whom love and vengeance both at once delight.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Street before FONDLEWIFE'S *House.*

BELLMOUR *in fanatic habit, and* SETTER.

Bell. 'Tis pretty near the hour.—[*Looking on his watch.*] Well, and how, Setter, ha? does my hypocrisy fit me, ha? does it sit easy on me?

Set. O most religiously well, sir.

Bell. I wonder why all our young fellows should glory in an opinion of atheism, when they may be so much more conveniently lewd under the coverlet of religion.

Set. Sbud, sir, away quickly! there's Fondlewife just turned the corner, and's coming this way.

Bell. Gads so, there he is, he must not see me.

SCENE II.

FONDLEWIFE *and* BARNABY.

Fond. I say I will tarry at home.

Bar. But, sir—

Fond. Good lack! I profess the spirit of contradiction hath possessed the lad—I say I will tarry at home, varlet!

Bar. I have done, sir; then farewell five hundred pounds!

Fond. Ha, how's that! Stay, stay, did you leave word, say you, with his wife? with Comfort herself?

Bar. I did; and Comfort will send Tribulation hither as soon as ever he comes home.—I could have brought young Mr. Prig to have kept my mistress company in the mean time; but you say—

Fond. How, how, say, varlet? I say let him not come near my doors; I say he is a wanton young Levite, and pampereth himself up with dainties, that

he may look lovely in the eyes of women.—Sincerely I am afraid he hath already defiled the tabernacle of our sister Comfort; while her good husband is deluded by his godly appearance. I say, that even lust doth sparkle in his eyes, and glow upon his cheeks, and that I would as soon trust my wife with a lord's high-fed chaplain.

Bar. Sir, the hour draws nigh, and nothing will be done there till you come.

Fond. And nothing can be done here till I go, so that I'll tarry, d'ye see.

Bar. And run the hazard to lose your affair, sir?

Fond. Good lack, good lack!—I profess 'tis a very sufficient vexation, for a man to have a handsome wife.

Bar. Never, sir, but when the man is an insufficient husband. 'Tis then, indeed, like the vanity of taking a fine house, and yet be forced to let lodgings, to help pay the rent.

Fond. I profess, a very apt comparison, varlet. Go and bid my Cocky come out to me. I will give her some instructions, I will reason with her, before I go.

SCENE III.

FONDLEWIFE.

And, in the mean time, I will reason with myself.—Tell me, Isaac, why art thee jealous? why art thee distrustful of the wife of thy bosom?—because she is young and vigorous, and I am old and impotent. Then why didst thee marry, Isaac?—because she was beautiful and tempting, and because I was obstinate and doting; so that my inclination was, and is still, greater than my power. And will not that which tempted thee, also tempt others, who will tempt her, Isaac?—I fear it much. But does not thy wife love thee, nay, dote upon thee?—yes—Why then!—Ay, but to say truth, she's fonder of me than she has reason to be; and, in the way of trade, we still suspect the smoothest dealers of the deepest designs—and that she has some designs deeper than thou canst reach, th'hast experimented, Isaac—but, mum.

SCENE IV.

FONDLEWIFE *and* LÆTITIA.

Læt. I hope my dearest jewel is not going to leave me, are you, Nykin?

Fond. Wife, have you thoroughly considered how detestable, how heinous, and how crying a sin, the sin of adultery is? have you weighed it, I say? for it is a very weighty sin; and although it may lie heavy upon thee, yet thy husband must also bear his part; for thy iniquity will fall upon his head.

Læt. Bless me, what means my dear!

Fond. [*Aside.*] I profess she has an alluring eye; I am doubtful whether I shall trust her, even with Tribulation himself.—[*Aloud.*] Speak, I say, have you considered what it is to cuckold your husband?

Læt. [*Aside.*] I'm amazed; sure he has discovered nothing!—[*Aloud.*] Who has wronged me to my dearest? I hope my jewel does not think that ever I had any such thing in my head, or ever will have.

Fond. No, no, I tell you I shall have it in my head.

Læt. [*Aside.*] I know not what to think; but I'm resolved to find the meaning of it.—[*Aloud.*] Unkind dear! was it for this you sent to call me? is it not affliction enough that you are to leave me, but you must study to increase it by unjust suspicions?—[*Crying.*] Well—well—you know my fondness, and you love to tyrannise.— Go on, cruel man! do, triumph over my poor heart, while it holds; which cannot be long, with this usage of yours.—But that's what you want.—Well, you will have your ends soon—you will—you will.—Yes, it will break to oblige you. [*Sighs.*

Fond. [*Aside.*] Verily I fear I have carried the jest too far. Nay, look you now if she does not weep!—'Tis the fondest fool!—[*Aloud.*] Nay, Cocky, Cocky, nay, dear Cocky, don't cry, I was but in jest, I was not i'feck.

Læt. [*Aside.*] Oh then all's safe. I was terribly frighted.—[*Aloud.*] My affliction is always your jest, barbarous man!—Oh that I should love to this degree! yet—

Fond. Nay, Cocky—

Læt. No, no, you are weary of me, that's it;—that's all. You would get another wife, another fond fool, to break her heart.—Well, be as cruel as you can to me, I'll pray for you; and when I am dead with grief, may you have one that will love you as well as I have done: I shall be contented to lie at peace in my cold grave—since it will please you. [*Sighs.*

Fond. [*Aside.*] Good lack! good lack! she would melt a heart of oak.—I profess I can hold no longer.—[*Aloud.*] Nay, dear Cocky—I'feck you'll break my heart—I'feck you will. See, you have made me weep—made poor Nykin weep!—Nay, come kiss, buss poor Nykin—and I won't leave thee—I'll lose all first.

Læt. [*Aside.*] How! Heaven forbid! that will be carrying the jest too far indeed.

Fond. Won't you kiss Nykin?

Læt. Go, naughty Nykin, you don't love me.

Fond. Kiss, kiss, i'feck I do.

Læt. No, you don't. [*She kisses him.*

Fond. What, not love Cocky!

Læt. No—h. [*Sighs.*

Fond. I profess I do love thee better than five hundred pounds;—and so thou shalt say, for I'll leave it to stay with thee.

Læt. No, you shan't neglect your business for me—no indeed you san't, Nykin.—If you don't go, I'll think you been dealous of me still.

Fond. He! he! he! wilt thou, poor fool? then I will go, I won't be dealous.—Poor Cocky, kiss Nykin, kiss Nykin; ee! ee! ee!—Here will be the good man anon, to talk to Cocky, and teach her how a wife ought to behave herself.

Læt. [*Aside.*] I hope to have one that will show me how a husband ought to behave himself.—[*Aloud.*] I shall be glad to learn to please my jewel. [*Kiss.*

Fond. That's my good dear! — Come, kiss Nykin once more, and then get you in — so — get you in, get you in. Bye! bye!

Læt. Bye, Nykin!

Fond. Bye, Cocky!

Læt. Bye, Nykin!

Fond. Bye, Cocky! bye! bye!

SCENE V.

VAINLOVE *and* SHARPER.

Sharp. How, Araminta lost!

Vain. To confirm what I have said, read this— [*Gives a letter.*

Sharp. [*Reads.*] Hum, hum.—*And what then appeared a fault, upon reflection seems only an effect of a too powerful passion. I'm afraid I give too great a proof of my own at this time.—I am in disorder for what I have written. But something, I know not what, forced me. I only beg a favourable censure of this and your*—ARAMINTA.

Sharp. Lost! Pray Heaven thou hast not lost thy wits! Here, here, she's thy own, man, signed and sealed too. To her, man!—a delicious melon, pure and consenting ripe, and only waits thy cutting up!—She has been breeding love to thee all this while, and just now she's delivered of it.

Vain. 'Tis an untimely fruit, and she has miscarried of her love.

Sharp. Never leave this damnèd, ill-natured whimsy, Frank? Thou hast a sickly, peevish appetite; only chew love, and cannot digest it.

Vain. Yes, when I feed myself—but I hate to be crammed.—By Heaven, there's not a woman will give a man the pleasure of a chase! my sport is always balked, or cut short; I stumble over the game I would pursue. 'Tis dull and unnatural to have a hare run full in the hound's mouth, and would distaste the keenest hunter: I would have overtaken, not have met, my game.

Sharp. However, I hope you don't mean to forsake it; that will be but a kind of a mongrel cur's trick.—Well, are you for the Mall?

Vain. No, she will be there this evening.—Yes, I will go too—and she shall see her error in—

Sharp. In her choice, egad!—But thou canst not be so great a brute as to slight her?

Vain. I should disappoint her if I did not. By her management I should think she expects it.

All naturally fly what does pursue:
'Tis fit men should be coy, when women woo.

—◆—

SCENE VI.—*A Room in* FONDLEWIFE'S *House.*

A Servant introducing BELLMOUR *in a fanatic habit, with a patch upon one eye, and a book in his hand.*

Serv. Here's a chair, sir, if you please to repose yourself. My mistress is coming, sir. [*Exit.*

Bell. Secure in my disguise, I have outfaced suspicion, and even dared discovery, this cloak my sanctity, and trusty Scarron's novels my prayer-book. Methinks I am the very picture of Montufar in the *Hypocrites*—Oh, she comes!

—◆—

SCENE VII.

BELLMOUR *and* LÆTITIA.

Bell. "So breaks Aurora through the veil of night,
Thus fly the clouds, divided by her light,
And every eye receives a new-born sight."
[*Throwing off his cloak, patch, &c.*

Læt. "Thus strewed with blushes, like"—[*Discovering him, starts.*] Ah! Heaven defend me! who's this?

Bell. Your lover.

Læt. Vainlove's friend! I know his face, and he has betrayed me to him. [*Aside.*

Bell. You are surprised. Did you not expect a lover, madam? Those eyes shone kindly on my first appearance, though now they are o'ercast.

Læt. I may well be surprised at your person and impudence; they are both new to me. You are not what your first appearance promised; the piety of your habit was welcome, but not the hypocrisy.

Bell. Rather the hypocrisy was welcome, but not the hypocrite.

Læt. Who are you, sir? you have mistaken the house sure.

Bell. I have directions in my pocket, which agree with everything but your unkindness. [*Pulls out the letter.*

Læt. [*Aside.*] My letter! Base Vainlove! Then 'tis too late to dissemble.—[*Aloud.*] 'Tis plain then you have mistaken the person. [*Going.*

Bell. [*Aside.*] If we part so I'm mistaken.—[*Aloud.*] Hold, hold, madam! I confess I have run into an error: I beg your pardon a thousand times.—What an eternal blockhead am I! Can you forgive me the disorder I have put you into?—But it is a mistake which anybody might have made.

Læt. [*Aside.*] What can this mean? 'Tis impossible he should be mistaken after all this.—A handsome fellow if he had not surprised me: methinks, now I look on him again, I would not have him mistaken.—[*Aloud.*] We are all liable to mistakes, sir; if you own it to be so, there needs no further apology.

Bell. Nay, 'faith, madam, 'tis a pleasant one, and worth your hearing. Expecting a friend, last night, at his lodgings, till 'twas late, my intimacy with him gave me the freedom of his bed; he not coming home all night, a letter was delivered to me by a servant in the morning; upon the perusal I found the contents so charming, that I could think of nothing all day but putting 'em in practice—till just now, (the first time I ever looked upon the superscription,) I am the most surprised in the world to find it directed to Mr. Vainlove. Gad, madam, I ask you a million of pardons, and will make you any satisfaction.

Læt. I am discovered! and either Vainlove is not guilty, or he has handsomely excused him. [*Aside.*

Bell. You appear concerned, madam.

Læt. I hope you are a gentleman;—and since you are privy to a weak woman's failing, won't turn it to the prejudice of her reputation. You look as if you had more honour—

Bell. And more love, or my face is a false witness, and deserves to be pilloried. No, by Heaven! I swear—

Læt. Nay, don't swear if you'd have me believe you; but promise—

Bell. Well, I promise.—A promise is so cold!—give me leave to swear—by those eyes, those killing eyes; by those healing lips.—Oh! press the soft charm close to mine—and seal 'em up for ever.

Læt. Upon that condition. [*He kisses her.*

Bell. Eternity was in that moment!—One more, upon any condition.

Læt. Nay, now—[*Aside.*] I never saw anything so agreeably impudent!—[*Aloud.*] Won't you censure me for this, now?—but 'tis to buy your silence.—[*Kiss.*] Oh, but what am I doing!

Bell. Doing! no tongue can express it—not thy own! nor anything but thy lips! I am faint with excess of bliss: Oh, for love's sake, lead me any whither where I may lie down!—quickly, for I'm afraid I shall have a fit.

Læt. Bless me! what fit?

Bell. Oh, a convulsion!—I feel the symptoms.

Læt. Does it hold you long? I'm afraid to carry you into my chamber.

Bell. Oh, no! let me lie down upon the bed;—the fit will be soon over.

SCENE VIII.—*St. James's Park.*

ARAMINTA *and* BELINDA *meeting.*

Belin. Lard, my dear, I am glad I have met you!—I have been at the Exchange since, and am so tired.

Aram. Why, what's the matter?

Belin. Oh, the most inhuman barbarous hackney-coach! I am jolted to a jelly!—Am I not horridly toused? [*Pulls out a pocket-glass.*

Aram. Your head's a little out of order.

Belin. A little! O frightful! what a furious phiz I have! O most rueful! ha! ha! ha! O gad, I hope nobody will come this way, till I have put myself a little in repair.—Ah, my dear, I have seen such unhewn creatures since!—ha! ha! ha! I can't for my soul help thinking that I look just like one of 'em.—Good dear, pin this, and I'll tell you.—Very well—so, thank you, my dear.—But as I was telling you—pish! this is the untowardest lock!—So, as I was telling you—How d'ye like me now? hideous, ha? frightful still? or how?

Aram. No, no; you're very well as can be.

Belin. And so—but where did I leave off, my dear? I was telling you—

Aram. You were about to tell me something, child—but you left off before you began.

Belin. Oh; a most comical sight: a country squire, with the equipage of a wife and two daughters, came to Mrs. Snipwell's shop while I was there.—But, oh gad! two such unlicked cubs!

Aram. I warrant, plump, cherry-cheeked country girls.

Belin. Ay, o' my conscience, fat as barn-door fowl; but so bedecked, you would have taken 'em for Friesland hens, with their feathers growing the wrong way.—O, such outlandish creatures! Such tramontanæ, and foreigners to the fashion, or anything in practice! I had not patience to behold—I undertook the modelling of one of their fronts, the more modern structure.

Aram. Bless me, cousin, why would you affront anybody so? They might be gentlewomen of a very good family.

Belin. Of a very ancient one, I dare swear, by their dress.—Affront! pshaw, how you're mistaken! The poor creature, I warrant, was as full of curtsies as if I had been her godmother: the truth on't is, I did endeavour to make her look like a Christian, and she was sensible of it; for she thanked me, and gave me two apples, piping hot, out of her under-petticoat-pocket—ha! ha! ha! And t'other did so stare and gape! I fancied her like the front of her father's hall; her eyes were the two jut-windows, and her mouth the great door, most hospitably kept open for the entertainment of travelling flies.

Aram. So then, you have been diverted. What did they buy?

Belin. Why, the father bought a powder-horn, and an almanac, and a comb-case; the mother, a great fruz-tower, and a fat amber-necklace; the daughters only tore two pair of kid-leather gloves, with trying 'em on.—Oh gad! here comes the fool that dined at my lady Freelove's t'other day.

SCENE IX.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, SIR JOSEPH WITTOL, *and* BLUFFE.

Aram. May be he may not know us again.

Belin. We'll put on our masks to secure his ignorance. [*They put on their masks.*

Sir Jo. Nay, gad, I'll pick up! I'm resolved to make a night on't. I'll go to alderman Fondlewife by and by, and get fifty pieces more from him. Adslidikins, bully, we'll wallow in wine and women! Why, this same Madeira wine has made me as light as a grasshopper.—Hist! hist! bully; dost thou see those tearers?—[*Sings.*] *Look you what here is—Look you what here is—Toll—loll—dera—toll—loll.* Agad, t'other glass of Madeira, and I durst have attacked 'em in my own proper person, without your help.

Bluffe. Come on then, knight.—But d'ye know what to say to 'em?

Sir Jo. Say? pooh! pox! I've enough to say; never fear it—that is, if I can but think on't: truth is, I have but a treacherous memory.

Belin. O frightful! cousin, what shall we do? these things come towards us.

Aram. No matter—I see Vainlove coming this way; and, to confess my failing, I am willing to give him an opportunity of making his peace with me; and to rid me of those coxcombs when I seem oppressed with 'em, will be a fair one.

Bluffe. Ladies, by these hilts you are well met.

Aram. We are afraid not.

Bluffe. What says my pretty little knapsack carrier? [*To* BELINDA.

Belin. O monstrous filthy fellow! Good slovenly captain Huffe, Bluffe, (what is your hideous name?) be gone: you stink of brandy and tobacco, most soldier-like. Foh! [*Spits.*

Bluffe. Now am I slap dash down in the mouth, and have not one word to say! [*Aside.*

Aram. I hope my fool has not confidence enough to be troublesome. [*Aside.*

Sir Jo. Hem!—Pray, madam, which way's the wind?

Aram. A pithy question!—Have you sent your wits for a venture, sir, that you inquire?

Sir Jo. Nay, now I'm in, I can prattle like a magpie. [*Aside.*

SCENE X.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, Sir JOSEPH WITTOL, BLUFFE, SHARPER *and* VAINLOVE *at some distance.*

Belin. Dear Araminta, I'm tired.

Aram. [*Apart to* BELINDA.] 'Tis but pulling off our masks, and obliging Vainlove to know us. I'll be rid of my fool by fair means.—[*Aloud.*] Well, sir Joseph, you shall see my face; but be gone immediately.—I see one that will be jealous, to find me in discourse with you. Be discreet—no reply: but away. [*Unmasks.*

Sir Jo. [*Aside.*] The great fortune, that dined at my lady Freelove's! Sir Joseph, thou art a made man. Agad, I'm in love up to the ears. But I'll be discreet and hushed.

Bluffe. Nay, by the world, I'll see your face.

Belin. You shall. [*Unmasks.*

Sharp. Ladies, your humble servant.—We were afraid you would not have given us leave to know you.

Aram. We thought to have been private, but we find fools have the same advantage over a face in a mask, that a coward has while the sword is in the scabbard; so were forced to draw in our own defence.

Bluffe. My blood rises at that fellow; I can't stay where he is; and I must not draw in the Park. [*To* Sir JOSEPH.

Sir Jo. I wish I durst stay to let her know my lodging—

SCENE XI.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, *and* SHARPER.

Sharp. There is in true beauty, as in courage, somewhat which narrow souls cannot dare to admire.—And see, the owls are fled, as at the break of day!

Belin. Very courtly! — I believe Mr. Vainlove has not rubbed his eyes since break of day neither: he looks as if he durst not approach.—Nay, come, cousin, be friends with him.—I swear he looks so very simply, ha! ha! ha! —Well, a lover in the state of separation from his mistress is like a body without a soul.—Mr. Vainlove, shall I be bound for your good behaviour for the future?

Vain. [*Aside.*] Now must I pretend ignorance equal to hers, of what she knows as well as I.—[*Aloud.*] Men are apt to offend ('tis true) where they find most goodness to forgive; but, madam, I hope I shall prove of a temper not to abuse mercy by committing new offences.

Aram. So cold. [*Aside.*

Belin. I have broke the ice for you, Mr. Vainlove, and so I leave you.—Come, Mr. Sharper, you and I will take a turn, and laugh at the vulgar; both the great vulgar and the small.—Oh gad! I have a great passion for Cowley—don't you admire him?

Sharp. Oh, madam, he was our English Horace!

Belin. Ah, so fine! so extremely fine! so everything in the world that I like.—Oh Lord, walk this way! — I see a couple, I'll give you their history.

SCENE XII.

ARAMINTA *and* VAINLOVE.

Vain. I find, madam, the formality of the law must be observed, though the penalty of it be dispensed with; and an offender must plead to his arraignment, though he has his pardon in his pocket.

Aram. I'm amazed! This insolence exceeds t'other; — whoever has encouraged you to this assurance, presuming upon the easiness of my temper, has much deceived you, and so you shall find.

Vain. Heyday! which way now? here's fine doubling. [*Aside.*

Aram. Base man! was it not enough to affront me with your saucy passion!

Vain. You have given that passion a much kinder epithet than saucy in another place.

Aram. Another place! Some villanous design to blast my honour. But though thou hadst all the treachery and malice of thy sex, thou canst not lay a blemish on my fame: no, I have not erred in one favourable thought of mankind. How time might have deceived me in you I know not; my opinion was but young, and your early baseness has prevented its growing to a wrong belief. Unworthy and ungrateful! begone, and never see me more!

Vain. Did I dream! or do I dream! shall I believe my eyes or ears! the vision is here still.—Your passion, madam, will admit of no farther reasoning; but here's a silent witness of your acquaintance.

[*Takes out the letter, and offers it: she snatches it, and throws it away.*

Aram. There's poison in everything you touch! —blisters will follow—

Vain. That tongue, which denies what the hands have done.

Aram. Still mystically senseless and impudent. I find I must leave the place.

Vain. No, madam, I'm gone.—[*Aside.*] She knows her name's to it, which she will be unwilling to expose to the censure of the first finder. [*Exit.*

Aram. Woman's obstinacy made me blind to what woman's curiosity now tempts me to see. [*Takes up the letter.*

SCENE XIII.

BELINDA *and* SHARPER.

Belin. Nay, we have spared nobody, I swear. Mr. Sharper, you're a pure man; where did you get this excellent talent of railing?

Sharp. Faith, madam, the talent was born with me:—I confess, I have taken care to improve it, to qualify me for the society of ladies.

Belin. Nay, sure railing is the best qualification in a woman's man.

SCENE XIV.

BELINDA, SHARPER, *and* PACE.

Sharp. The second best, indeed, I think.

Belin. How now, Pace? where's my cousin?

Pace. She's not very well, madam, and has sent to know if your ladyship would have the coach come again for you?

Belin. O Lord, no, I'll go along with her.—Come, Mr. Sharper.

SCENE XV.—*A Chamber in* FONDLEWIFE'S *House.*

LÆTITIA *and* BELLMOUR, *his cloak, hat, &c. lying loose about the chamber.*

Bell. Here's nobody, nor no noise; 'twas nothing but your fears.

Læt. I durst have sworn I had heard my monster's voice.—I swear I was heartily frightened.—Feel how my heart beats.

Bell. 'Tis an alarm to love.—Come in again, and let us—

Fond. [*Without.*] Cocky! Cocky! where are you, Cocky? I'm come home.

Læt. Ah! there he is. Make haste, gather up your things.

Fond. Cocky! Cocky! open the door.

Bell. Pox choke him! would his horns were in his throat!—My patch, my patch.

[*Looking about, and gathering up his things.*

Læt. My jewel, art thou there?—No matter for your patch.—You s'an't tum in, Nykin.—Run into my chamber, quickly, quickly.—You s'an't tum in.

Fond. Nay, prithee, dear, i'feck I'm in haste.

Læt. Then I'll let you in. [*Opens the door.*

SCENE XVI.

LÆTITIA, FONDLEWIFE, *and* SIR JOSEPH WITTOL.

Fond. Kiss, dear.—I met the master of the ship by the way—and I must have my papers of accounts out of your cabinet.

Læt. Oh, I'm undone! [*Aside.*

Sir Jo. Pray, first let me have fifty pounds, good alderman, for I'm in haste.

Fond. A hundred has already been paid, by your order. Fifty? I have the sum ready in gold in my closet.

SCENE XVII.

LÆTITIA *and* SIR JOSEPH WITTOL.

Sir Jo. [*Aside.*] Agad, it's a curious, fine, pretty rogue; I'll speak to her.—[*Aloud.*] Pray, madam, what news d'ye hear?

Læt. Sir, I seldom stir abroad.

[*Walks about in disorder.*

Sir Jo. I wonder at that, madam, for 'tis most curious fine weather.

Læt. Methinks 't has been very ill weather.

Sir Jo. As you say, madam, 'tis pretty bad weather, and has been so a great while.

SCENE XVIII.

LÆTITIA, SIR JOSEPH WITTOL, *and* FONDLEWIFE.

Fond. Here are fifty pieces in this purse, sir Joseph: if you will tarry a moment till I fetch my papers, I'll wait upon you down stairs.

Læt. [*Aside.*] Ruined, past redemption! What shall I do?—Ha! this fool may be of use.—[*As* FONDLEWIFE *is going into the chamber, she runs to* SIR JOSEPH, *almost pushes him down, and cries out.*] Stand off, rude ruffian! Help me, my dear—O bless me! why will you leave me alone with such a satyr?

Fond. Bless us! what's the matter? what's the matter?

Læt. Your back was no sooner turned, but like a lion, he came open-mouthed upon me, and would have ravished a kiss from me by main force.

Sir Jo. Oh Lord! Oh terrible! ha! ha! ha! is your wife mad, alderman?

Læt. Oh! I'm sick with the fright; won't you take him out of my sight?

Fond. Oh traitor! I'm astonished, Oh bloody-minded traitor!

Sir Jo. Heyday! Traitor yourself—by the Lord Harry, I was in most danger of being ravished, if you go to that.

Fond. Oh how the blasphemous wretch swears! out of my house, thou son of the whore of Babylon! offspring of Bel and the Dragon!—Bless us! ravish my wife! my Dinah! Oh Shechemite! begone, I say!

Sir Jo. Why, the devil's in the people, I think!

SCENE XIX.

LÆTITIA *and* FONDLEWIFE.

Læt. Oh! won't you follow, and see him out of doors, my dear?

Fond. I'll shut the door, to secure him from coming back.—Give me the key of your cabinet, Cocky.—Ravish my wife before my face! I warrant he's a papist in his heart, at least, if not a Frenchman.

Læt. [*Aside.*] What can I do now!—[*Aloud.*] Oh, my dear! I have been in such a fright, that I forgot to tell you poor Mr. Spintext has a sad fit of the cholic, and is forced to lie down upon our bed.—You'll disturb him? I can tread softlier.

Fond. Alack, poor man!—no, no—you don't know the papers.—I won't disturb him; give me the key.

[*She gives him the key, goes to the chamber-door, and speaks aloud.*

Læt. 'Tis nobody but Mr. Fondlewife; Mr. Spintext, lie still on your stomach; lying on your stomach will ease you of the cholic.

Fond. Ay, ay, lie still, lie still; don't let me disturb you.

SCENE XX.

LÆTITIA.

Sure, when he does not see his face, he won't discover him. Dear Fortune, help me but this once, and I'll never run into thy debt again!—But this opportunity is the devil.

SCENE XXI.

LÆTITIA *and* FONDLEWIFE.

Fond. Good lack! good lack! I profess, the poor man is in great torment, he lies as flat—dear, you should heat a trencher or a napkin—where's Deborah? let her clap some warm thing to his sto-

mach, or chafe it with a warm hand, rather than fail.—What book's this?

[*Sees the book that* Bellmour *forgot.*

Læt. Mr. Spintext's prayer-book, dear.—[*Aside.*] Pray Heaven it be a prayer-book!

Fond. Good man! I warrant he dropped it on purpose, that you might take it up and read some of the pious ejaculations.—[*Taking up the book.*] O bless me! O monstrous! A prayer-book! Ay this is the devil's pater-noster: hold, let me see, *The Innocent Adultery.*

Læt. Misfortune! now all's ruined again. [*Aside.*

Bell. [*Peeping.*] Damned chance! if I had gone a whoring with the *Practice of Piety* in my pocket, I had never been discovered.

Fond. Adultery and innocent! O Lord! here's doctrine! ay, here's discipline!

Læt. Dear husband, I'm amazed.—Sure it is a good book, and only tends to the speculation of sin.

Fond. Speculation! no, no; something went farther than speculation when I was not to be let in.—Where is this apocryphal elder? I'll ferret him.

Læt. I'm so distracted, I can't think of a lie. [*Aside.*

SCENE XXII.

Lætitia, *and* Fondlewife, *haling out* Bellmour.

Fond. Come out here, thou Ananias incarnate! Who,—how now,—who have we here?

Læt. Ha! [*Shrieks, as surprised.*

Fond. Oh, thou salacious woman! am I then brutified? Ay, I feel it here; I sprout! I bud! I blossom! I am ripe-horn-mad!—But who, in the devil's name, are you? mercy on me for swearing! But—

Læt. Oh, goodness keep us! who's this?—Who are you? what are you?

Bell. So!

Læt. In the name of the—O! good, my dear don't come near it, I'm afraid 'tis the devil; indeed it has hoofs, dear.

Fond. Indeed, and I have horns, dear. The devil! no, I am afraid, 'tis the flesh, thou harlot! Dear, with the pox!—Come, siren, speak, confess, who is this reverend, brawny pastor?

Læt. Indeed, and indeed, now my dear Nykin, I never saw this wicked man before.

Fond. Oh, it is a man then, it seems!

Læt. Rather, sure, it is a wolf in the clothing of a sheep.

Fond. Thou art a devil in his proper clothing, woman's flesh. What, you know nothing of him, but his fleece here! You don't love mutton! you Magdalen unconverted?

Bell. Well, now I know my cue—that is, very honourably to excuse her, and very impudently accuse myself. [*Aside.*

Læt. Why then, I wish I may never enter into the heaven of your embraces again, my dear, if ever I saw his face before.

Fond. O Lord! O strange! I am in admiration of your impudence. Look at him a little better; he is more modest, I warrant you, than to deny it.—Come, were you two never face to face before? Speak.

Bell. Since all artifice is vain, and I think myself obliged to speak the truth in justice to your wife, no.

Fond. Humph.

Læt. No indeed, dear.

Fond. Nay, I find you are both in a story; that I must confess. But, what—not to be cured of the colic? don't you know your patient, Mrs. Quack? Oh, lie upon your stomach; lying upon your stomach will cure you of the colic. Ah! answer me, Jezebel!

Læt. Let the wicked man answer for himself: does he think that I have nothing to do but excuse him? 'tis enough, if I can clear my own innocence to my own dear.

Bell. By my troth, and so 'tis; I have been a little too backward, that's the truth on't.

Fond. Come, sir, who are you, in the first place? and what are you?

Bell. A whore-master.

Fond. Very concise.

Læt. O beastly, impudent creature!

Fond. Well, sir, and what came you hither for?

Bell. To lie with your wife.

Fond. Good again.—A very civil person this, and I believe speaks truth.

Læt. Oh, insupportable impudence!

Fond. Well, sir—pray be covered—and you have —heh! you have finished the matter, heh? and I am, as I should be, a sort of a civil perquisite to a whore-master, called a cuckold, heh? Is it not so? come, I'm inclining to believe every word you say.

Bell. Why, faith, I must confess, so I designed you: but you were a little unlucky in coming so soon, and hindered the making of your own fortune.

Fond. Humph. Nay, if you mince the matter once, and go back of your word, you are not the person I took you for: come, come, go on boldly.—What, don't be ashamed of your profession!—Confess, confess, I shall love thee the better for't—I shall, i'feck!—What, dost think I don't know how to behave myself in the employment of a cuckold, and have been three years apprentice to matrimony? come, come, plain-dealing is a jewel.

Bell. Well, since I see thou art a good honest fellow, I'll confess the whole matter to thee.

Fond. Oh, I am a very honest fellow!—you never lay with an honester man's wife in your life.

Læt. How my heart aches! All my comfort lies in his impudence, and, heaven be praised, he has a considerable portion. [*Aside.*

Bell. In short then, I was informed of the opportunity of your absence by my spy (for faith, honest Isaac, I have a long time designed thee this favour): I knew Spintext was to come by your direction.—But I laid a trap for him, and procured his habit; in which I passed upon your servants, and was conducted hither. I pretended a fit of the colic to excuse my lying down upon your bed; hoping that when she heard of it her good-nature would bring her to administer remedies for my distemper.—You know what might have followed.—But like an uncivil person, you knocked at the door before your wife was come to me.

Fond. Ha, this is apocryphal! I may choose whether I will believe it or no.

Bell. That you may, faith, and I hope you won't believe a word on't; but I can't help telling the truth, for my life.

Fond. How! would not you have me believe you, say you?

Bell. No; for then you must of consequence

part with your wife, and there will be some hopes of having her upon the public; then the encouragement of a separate maintenance—

Fond. No, no, for that matter, when she and I part, she'll carry her separate maintenance about her.

Læt. Ah, cruel dear, how can you be so barbarous? You'll break my heart if you talk of parting. [*Cries.*

Fond. Ah, dissembling vermin!

Bell. How canst thou be so cruel, Isaac? thou hast the heart of a mountain-tiger. By the faith of a sincere sinner, she's innocent for me.—Go to him, madam, fling your snowy arms about his stubborn neck; bathe his relentless face in your salt trickling tears.

[*She goes and hangs upon his neck, and kisses him;* BELLMOUR *kisses her hand behind* FONDLEWIFE'S *back.*

So, a few soft words, and a kiss, and the good man melts. See how kind nature works, and boils over in him!

Læt. Indeed, my dear, I was but just come down stairs when you knocked at the door, and the maid told me Mr. Spintext was ill of the colic upon our bed. And won't you speak to me, cruel Nykin? indeed, I'll die if you don't.

Fond. Ah, no, no, I cannot speak, my heart's so full! I have been a tender husband, a tender yoke-fellow; you know I have.—But thou hast been a faithless Dalilah, and the Philistines—heh! art thou not vile and unclean?—heh! speak! [*Weeping.*

Læt. No—h. [*Sighing.*

Fond. Oh, that I could believe thee!

Læt. Oh, my heart will break! [*Pretends to faint.*

Fond. Heh! how! no, stay, stay, I will believe thee, I will.—Pray bend her forward, sir.

Læt. Oh! oh! where is my dear?

Fond. Here, here, I do believe thee.—I won't believe my own eyes.

Bell. For my part, I am so charmed with the love of your turtle to you, that I'll go and solicit matrimony with all my might and main.

Fond. Well, well, sir; as long as I believe it, 'tis well enough. No thanks to you, sir, for her virtue. —But I'll show you the way out of my house, if you please.—Come, my dear. Nay, I will believe thee, I do, i'feck.

Bell. See the great blessing of an easy faith! opinion cannot err:—

No husband by his wife can be deceived;
She still is virtuous, if she's so believed. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Street.*

BELLMOUR *in a fanatic habit,* SETTER, HEARTWELL, *and* LUCY.

Bell. Setter! well encountered.

Set. Joy of your return, sir. Have you made a good voyage? or have you brought your own lading back?

Bell. No, I have brought nothing but ballast back—made a delicious voyage, Setter; and might have rode at anchor in the port 'till this time, but the enemy surprised us.—I would unrig.

Set. I attend you, sir.

Bell. Ha! is not that Heartwell at Silvia's door? Be gone quickly, I'll follow you:—I would not be known.—Pox take 'em! they stand just in my way.

SCENE II.

BELLMOUR, HEARTWELL, *and* LUCY.

Heart. I'm impatient till it be done.

Lucy. That may be, without troubling yourself to go again for your brother's chaplain. Don't you see that stalking form of godliness?

Heart. O ay, he's a fanatic.

Lucy. An executioner qualified to do your business: he has been lawfully ordained.

Heart. I'll pay him well if you'll break the matter to him.

Lucy. I warrant you; do you go and prepare your bride.

SCENE III.

BELLMOUR *and* LUCY.

Bell. Humph, sits the wind there?—What a lucky rogue am I! Oh, what sport will be here, if I can persuade this wench to secrecy?

Lucy. Sir, reverend sir.

Bell. Madam. [*Discovers himself.*

Lucy. Now, goodness have mercy upon me! Mr. Bellmour? is it you?

Bell. Even I: what dost think?

Lucy. Think! that I should not believe my eyes, and that you are not what you seem to be.

Bell. True. But to convince thee who I am, thou knowest my old token. [*Kisses her.*

Lucy. Nay, Mr. Bellmour: O Lard! I believe you are a parson in good earnest, you kiss so devoutly.

Bell. Well, your business with me, Lucy?

Lucy. I had none, but through mistake.

Bell. Which mistake you must go through with, Lucy.—Come, I know the intrigue between Heartwell and your mistress; and you mistook me for Tribulation Spintext, to marry 'em—ha? are not matters in this posture?—Confess; come, I'll be faithful, I will i'faith.—What, diffide in me, Lucy?

Lucy. Alas-a-day; you and Mr. Vainlove, between you, have ruined my poor mistress; you have made a gap in her reputation; and can you blame her if she make it up with a husband?

Bell. Well, is it as I say?

Lucy. Well, it is then; but you'll be secret?

Bell. Phuh! secret! ay:—and to be out of thy debt, I'll trust thee with another secret. Your mistress must not marry Heartwell, Lucy.

Lucy. How! O Lord!

Bell. Nay, don't be in a passion, Lucy;—I'll provide a fitter husband for her.—Come, here's earnest of my good intentions for thee too; let this mollify.—[*Gives her money*.] Look you, Heartwell is my friend; and though he be blind, I must not see him fall into the snare, and unwittingly marry a whore.

Lucy. Whore! I'd have you to know my mistress scorns—

Bell. Nay, nay; look you, Lucy, there are whores of as good quality.—But to the purpose, if you will give me leave to acquaint you with it.—Do you carry on the mistake of me: I'll marry 'em. —Nay, don't pause; if you do, I'll spoil all. I have some private reasons for what I do, which I'll tell you within.—In the mean time, I promise, and rely upon me, to help your mistress to a husband: nay, and thee too, Lucy.—Here's my hand, I will, with a fresh assurance. [*Gives her more money*.

Lucy. Ah, the devil is not so cunning!—you know my easy nature. Well, for once I'll venture to serve you; but if you deceive me, the curse of all kind, tender-hearted women light upon you!

Bell. That's as much as to say, *The pox take me!*—Well, lead on.

SCENE IV.

VAINLOVE, SHARPER, *and* SETTER.

Sharp. Just now, say you, gone in with Lucy?

Set. I saw him, sir, and stood at the corner where you found me, and overheard all they said: Mr. Bellmour is to marry 'em.

Sharp. Ha! ha! 'twill be a pleasant cheat. I'll plague Heartwell when I see him.—Prithee, Frank, let's tease him; make him fret till he foam at the mouth, and disgorge his matrimonial oath with interest.—Come, thou'rt musty.

Set. [*To* SHARPER.] Sir, a word with you. [*Whispers him*.

Vain. Sharper swears she has forsworn the letter.—I'm sure he tells me truth;—but I am not sure she told him truth.—Yet she was unaffectedly concerned, he says, and often blushed with anger and surprise:—and so I remember in the Park. She had reason, if I wrong her.—I begin to doubt.

Sharp. Say'st thou so?

Set. This afternoon, sir, about an hour before my master received the letter.

Sharp. In my conscience, like enough.

Set. Ay, I know her, sir; at least, I'm sure I can fish it out of her: she's the very sluice to her lady's secrets: 'tis but setting her mill a-going, and I can drain her of 'em all.

Sharp. Here, Frank, your blood-hound has made out the fault: this letter, that so sticks in thy maw, is counterfeit; only a trick of Silvia in revenge, contrived by Lucy.

Vain. Ha! it has a colour.—But how do you know it, sirrah?

Set. I do suspect as much;—because why, sir—She was pumping me about how your worship's affairs stood towards madam Araminta; as when you had seen her last? when you were to see her next? and where you were to be found at that time? and such like.

Vain. And where did you tell her?

Set. In the Piazza.

Vain. There I received the letter.—It must be so.—And why did you not find me out, to tell me this before, sot?

Set. Sir, I was pimping for Mr. Bellmour.

Sharp. You were well employed:—I think there is no objection to the excuse.

Vain. Pox o' my saucy credulity! If I have lost her, I deserve it. But if confession and repentance be of force, I'll win her, or weary her into a forgiveness. [*Exit*.

Sharp. Methinks I long to see Bellmour come forth.

SCENE V.

SHARPER, BELLMOUR, *and* SETTER.

Set. Talk of the devil—see where he comes!

Sharp. Hugging himself on his prosperous mischief.—No real fanatic can look better pleased after a successful sermon of sedition.

Bell. Sharper! fortify thy spleen: such a jest! Speak when thou art ready.

Sharp. Now, were I ill-natured, would I utterly disappoint thy mirth: hear thee tell thy mighty jest with as much gravity as a bishop hears venereal causes in the spiritual court: not so much as wrinkle my face with one smile; but let thee look simply, and laugh by thyself.

Bell. Pshaw! no; I have a better opinion of thy wit.—Gad, I defy thee—

Sharp. Were it not loss of time, you should make the experiment. But honest Setter, here, overheard you with Lucy, and has told me all.

Bell. Nay, then, I thank thee for not putting me out of countenance. But, to tell you something you don't know, I got an opportunity (after I had married 'em) of discovering the cheat to Silvia. She took it, at first, as another woman would the like disappointment: but my promise to make her amends quickly with another husband somewhat pacified her.

Sharp. But how the devil do you think to acquit yourself of your promise? will you marry her yourself?

Bell. I have no such intentions at present.—Prithee, wilt thou think a little for me? I am sure the ingenious Mr. Setter will assist.

Set. O Lord, sir.

Bell. I'll leave him with you, and go shift my habit.

SCENE VI.

SHARPER, SETTER, SIR JOSEPH WITTOL, *and* BLUFFE.

Sharp. Heh! sure, Fortune has sent this fool hither on purpose. Setter, stand close; seem not to observe 'em, and hark ye— [*Whispers*.

Bluffe. Fear him not; I am prepared for him now; and he shall find he might have safer roused a sleeping lion.

Sir Jo. Hush, hush! don't you see him?

Bluffe. Show him to me: where is he?

Sir Jo. Nay, don't speak so loud—I don't jest, as I did a little while ago.—Look yonder.—Agad, if he should hear the lion roar, he'd cudgel him

into an ass, and his primitive braying. Don't you remember the story in Æsop's Fables, bully? Agad, there are good morals to be picked out of Æsop's Fables, let me tell you that; and Reynard the Fox, too.

Bluffe. Damn your morals!

Sir Jo. Prithee, don't speak so loud.

Bluffe. Damn your morals!—I must revenge the affront done to my honour. [*In a low voice.*

Sir Jo. Ay; do, do, captain, if you think fitting;—you may dispose of your own flesh as you think fitting, d'ye see.—But, by the Lord Harry, I'll leave you. [*Stealing away upon his tiptoes.*

Bluffe. Prodigious! what, will you forsake your friend in extremity! You can't in honour refuse to carry him a challenge.

[*Almost whispering, and treading softly after him.*

Sir Jo. Prithee, what do you see in my face that looks as if I would carry a challenge? Honour is your province, captain: take it—All the world know me to be a knight, and a man of worship.

Set. I warrant you, sir, I'm instructed.

[*Apart to* SHARPER.

Sharp. [*Aloud.*] Impossible! Araminta take a liking to a fool!

Set. Her head runs on nothing else, nor she can talk of nothing else.

Sharp. I know she commended him all the while we were in the Park; but I thought it had been only to make Vainlove jealous.

Sir Jo. How's this? Good bully, hold your breath, and let's hearken. Agad, this must be I.

Sharp. Death, it can't be!—an oaf, an idiot, a wittol!

Sir Jo. Ay, now it's out: 'tis I, my own individual person.

Sharp. A wretch, that has flown for shelter to the lowest shrub of mankind, and seeks protection from a blasted coward.

Sir Jo. That's you, bully back.

[BLUFFE *frowns upon* SIR JOSEPH.

Sharp. She has given Vainlove her promise to marry him before to-morrow morning—has she not?

[*To* SETTER.

Set. She has, sir; and I have it in charge to attend her all this evening, in order to conduct her to the place appointed.

Sharp. Well, I'll go and inform your master; and do you press her to make all the haste imaginable.

SCENE VII.

SETTER, SIR JOSEPH WITTOL, *and* BLUFFE.

Set. Were I a rogue now, what a noble prize could I dispose of! A goodly pinnace, richly laden, and to launch forth under my auspicious convoy. Twelve thousand pounds, and all her rigging; besides what lies concealed under hatches.—Ha! all this committed to my care!—Avaunt temptation!—Setter, show thyself a person of worth; be true to thy trust, and be reputed honest. Reputed honest! Hum: is that all?—ay: for to be honest is nothing; the reputation of it is all. Reputation! what have such poor rogues as I to do with reputation? 'tis above us; and for men of quality, they are above it; so that reputation is e'en as foolish a thing as honesty. And for my part, if I meet sir Joseph with a purse of gold in his hand, I'll dispose of mine to the best advantage.

Sir Jo. Heh! heh! heh! here 'tis for you, i'faith, Mr. Setter. Nay, I'll take you at your word! [*Chinking a purse.*

Set. Sir Joseph and the captain too! undone, undone! I'm undone, my master's undone, my lady's undone, and all the business is undone!

Sir Jo. No, no, never fear, man, the lady's business shall be done. What!—Come, Mr. Setter, I have overheard all, and to speak is but loss of time; but if there be occasion, let these worthy gentlemen intercede for me. [*Gives him gold.*

Set. O Lord, sir, what d'ye mean? corrupt my honesty!—They have indeed very persuading faces; but—

Sir Jo. 'Tis too little.—There's more, man:—there take all.—Now—

Set. Well, sir Joseph, you have such a winning way with you—

Sir Jo. And how, and how, good Setter, did the little rogue look, when she talked of sir Joseph? Did not her eyes twinkle, and her mouth water? did not she pull up her little bubbies? and—agad, I'm so overjoyed!—and stroke down her belly? and then step aside to tie her garter, when she was thinking of her love? heh, Setter!

Set. Oh, yes, sir.

Sir Jo. How now, bully? What, melancholy, because I'm in the lady's favour?—No matter, I'll make your peace—I know they were a little smart upon you.—But I warrant, I'll bring you into the lady's good graces.

Bluffe. Pshaw! I have petitions to show from other-guess toys than she. Look here; these were sent me this morning. There, read. [*Shows letters.*] That—that's a scrawl of quality. Here, here's from a countess too. Hum—no, hold—that's from a knight's wife, she sent it me by her husband.—But here, both these are from persons of great quality.

Sir Jo. They are either from persons of great quality, or no quality at all, 'tis such a damned ugly hand.

[*While* SIR JOSEPH *reads*, BLUFFE *whispers* SETTER.

Set. Captain, I would do anything to serve you; but this is so difficult—

Bluffe. Not at all; don't I know him?

Set. You'll remember the conditions?

Bluffe. I'll give it you under my hand.—In the mean time, here's earnest.—[*Gives him money.*] Come, knight; I'm capitulating with Mr. Setter for you.

Sir Jo. Ah, honest Setter; sirrah, I'll give thee anything but a night's lodging.

SCENE VIII.

SHARPER *tugging in* HEARTWELL.

Sharp. Nay, prithee leave railing, and come along with me; may be she mayn't be within. 'Tis but to yond' corner house.

Heart. Whither? whither? which corner house?

Sharp. Why, there: the two white posts.

Heart. And who would you visit there, say you? [*Aside.*] Oons, how my heart aches!

Sharp. Pshaw, thou'rt so troublesome and inquisitive! Why, I'll tell you, 'tis a young crea-

ture that Vainlove debauched, and has forsaken. Did you never hear Bellmour chide him about Silvia?

Heart. [*Aside.*] Death and hell and marriage! my wife!

Sharp. Why thou art as musty as a new married man, that had found his wife knowing the first night.

Heart. [*Aside.*] Hell and the devil! does he know it? But hold—if he should not, I were a fool to discover it.—I'll dissemble, and try him.—[*Aloud.*] Ha! ha! ha! why, Tom, is that such an occasion of melancholy? Is it such an uncommon mischief?

Sharp. No, faith; I believe not. Few women but have their year of probation, before they are cloistered in the narrow joys of wedlock. But, prithee come along with me, or I'll go and have the lady to myself. B'w'y George. [*Going.*

Heart. [*Aside.*] O torture! how he racks and tears me!—Death! shall I own my shame, or wittingly let him go and whore my wife? no, that's insupportable.—[*Aloud.*] Oh, Sharper!

Sharp. How now?

Heart. Oh, I am—married.

Sharp. [*Aside.*] Now hold spleen.—[*Aloud.*] Married!

Heart. Certainly, irrecoverably married.

Sharp. Heaven forbid, man! how long?

Heart. Oh, an age, an age! I have been married these two hours.

Sharp. My old bachelor married! that were a jest! ha! ha! ha!

Heart. Death! d'ye mock me! Hark ye, if either you esteem my friendship or your own safety, come not near that house—that corner house—that hot brothel: ask no questions. [*Exit.*

Sharp. Mad, by this light!

Thus grief still treads upon the heels of pleasure;
Married in haste, we may repent at leisure.

SCENE IX.

SHARPER *and* SETTER.

Set. Some by experience find those words misplaced:
At leisure married, they repent in haste.
As, I suppose, my master Heartwell.

Sharp. Here again, my Mercury?

Set. Sublimate, if you please, sir: I think my achievements do deserve the epithet.—Mercury was a pimp too; but though I blush to own it, at this time, I must confess I am somewhat fallen from the dignity of my function, and do condescend to be scandalously employed in the promotion of vulgar matrimony.

Sharp. As how, dear dexterous pimp?

Set. Why, to be brief, for I have weighty affairs depending,—our stratagem succeeded as you intended. Bluffe turns arrant traitor: bribes me to make a private conveyance of the lady to him, and put a sham settlement upon Sir Joseph.

Sharp. O rogue! well, but I hope—

Set. No, no; never fear me, sir.—I privately informed the knight of the treachery; who has agreed, seemingly to be cheated, that the captain may be so in reality.

Sharp. Where's the bride?

Set. Shifting clothes for the purpose at a friend's house of mine. Here's company coming; if you'll walk this way, sir, I'll tell you.

SCENE X.

BELLMOUR, BELINDA, ARAMINTA, *and* VAINLOVE.

Vain. Oh, 'twas frenzy all! cannot you forgive it?—men in madness have a title to your pity. [*To* ARAMINTA.

Aram. Which they forfeit, when they are restored to their senses.

Vain. I am not presuming beyond a pardon.

Aram. You who could reproach me with one counterfeit, how insolent would a real pardon make you! but there's no need to forgive what is not worth my anger.

Belin. [*To* BELLMOUR.] O my conscience, I could find in my heart to marry thee, purely to be rid of thee: at least thou art so troublesome a lover, there's hopes thou'lt make a more than ordinary quiet husband.

Bell. Say you so? is that a maxim among you?

Belin. Yes; you fluttering men of the mode have made marriage a mere French dish.

Bell. I hope there's no French sauce. [*Aside.*

Belin. You are so curious in the preparation; that is, your courtship, one would think you meant a noble entertainment; but when we come to feed, 'tis all froth, and poor, but in show; nay, often only remains which have been I know not how many times warmed for other company, and at last served up cold to the wife.

Bell. That were a miserable wretch indeed, who could not afford one warm dish for the wife of his bosom.—But you timorous virgins form a dreadful chimera of a husband, as of a creature contrary to that soft, humble, pliant, easy thing, a lover; so guess at plagues in matrimony, in opposition to the pleasures of courtship. Alas! courtship to marriage, is but as the music in the playhouse till the curtain's drawn; but that once up, then opens the scene of pleasure.

Belin. Oh, foh! no; rather courtship to marriage, is as a very witty prologue to a very dull play.

SCENE XI.

BELLMOUR, BELINDA, ARAMINTA, VAINLOVE, *and* SHARPER.

Sharp. Hist, Bellmour; if you'll bring the ladies, make haste to Silvia's lodgings, before Heartwell has fretted himself out of breath.

Bell. You have an opportunity now, madam, to revenge yourself upon Heartwell, for affronting your squirrel. [*To* BELINDA.

Belin. O, the filthy rude beast!

Aram. 'Tis a lasting quarrel; I think he has never been at our house since.

Bell. But give yourselves the trouble to walk to that corner-house, and I'll tell you by the way what may divert and surprise you.

SCENE XII.—*Silvia's Lodgings.*

HEARTWELL *and* BOY.

Heart. Gone forth, say you, with her maid!

Boy. There was a man too that fetched 'em out; Setter I think they called him. [*Exit.*

Heart. So—that precious pimp too.—Damned, damned strumpet! could she not contain herself on her wedding day! not hold out till night. O cursed state! how wide we err, when apprehensive of the load of life,—

We hope to find
That help which Nature meant in womankind,
To man that supplemental self design'd;
But proves a burning caustic when applied;
And Adam, sure, could with more ease abide
The bone when broken, than when made a bride.

SCENE XIII.

HEARTWELL, BELLMOUR, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, *and* ARAMINTA.

Bell. Now, George, what, rhyming! I thought the chimes of verse were passed, when once the doleful marriage-knell was rung.

Heart. Shame and confusion, I am exposed!

[VAINLOVE *and* ARAMINTA *talk apart.*

Belin. Joy, joy, Mr. Bridegroom! I give you joy, sir!

Heart. 'Tis not in thy nature to give me joy: a woman can as soon give immortality.

Belin. Ha! ha! ha! O gad, men grow such clowns when they are married!

Bell. That they are fit for no company but their wives.

Belin. Nor for them neither, in a little time.—I swear, at the month's end, you shall hardly find a married man that will do a civil thing to his wife, or say a civil thing to anybody else.—How he looks already! ha! ha! ha!

Bell. Ha! ha! ha!

Heart. Death, am I made your laughing-stock? —For you, sir, I shall find a time; but take off your wasp here, or the clown may grow boisterous; I have a fly-flap.

Belin. You have occasion for't, your wife has been blown upon.

Bell. That's home.

Heart. Not fiends or furies could have added to my vexation, or anything but another woman!—you've racked my patience; begone, or by—

Bell. Hold, hold; what the devil, thou wilt not draw upon a woman!

Vain. What's the matter?

Aram. Bless me! what have you done to him!

Belin. Only touched a galled beast till he winced.

Vain. Bellmour, give it over; you vex him too much; 'tis all serious to him.

Belin. Nay, I swear, I begin to pity him myself.

Heart. Damn your pity!—But let me be calm a little.—How have I deserved this of you? any of ye?—Sir, have I impaired the honour of your house, promised your sister marriage, and whored her? Wherein have I injured you? Did I bring a physician to your father when he lay expiring, and endeavour to prolong his life, and you one-and-twenty?—Madam, have I had an opportunity with you and balked it?—did you ever offer me the favour that I refused it? Or—

Belin. Oh, foh! what does the filthy fellow mean? lard, let me begone!

Aram. Hang me, if I pity you; you are right enough served.

Bell. This is a little scurrilous though.

Vain. Nay, 'tis a sore of your own scratching. —[*To* HEARTWELL.] Well, George—

Heart. You are the principal cause of all my present ills. If Silvia had not been your mistress, my wife might have been honest.

Vain. And if Silvia had not been your wife, my mistress might have been just:—there we are even. —But have a good heart, I heard of your misfortune, and come to your relief.

Heart. When execution's over, you offer a reprieve.

Vain. What would you give?

Heart. Oh! anything, everything, a leg or two, or an arm; nay, I would be divorced from my virility, to be divorced from my wife.

SCENE XIV.

HEARTWELL, BELLMOUR, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, ARAMINTA, *and* SHARPER.

Vain. Faith, that's a sure way—but here's one can sell your freedom better cheap.

Sharp. Vainlove, I have been a kind of a godfather to you, yonder; I have promised and vowed some things in your name, which I think you are bound to perform.

Vain. No signing to a blank, friend.

Sharp. No, I'll deal fairly with you:—'tis a full and free discharge to sir Joseph Wittol and captain Bluffe, for all injuries whatsoever, done unto you by them, until the present date hereof.—How say you?

Vain. Agreed.

Sharp. Then let me beg these ladies to wear their masks a moment.—Come in, gentlemen and ladies.

Heart. What the devil's all this to me?

Vain. Patience.

SCENE XV.

HEARTWELL, BELLMOUR, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, ARAMINTA, SHARPER, SIR JOSEPH WITTOL, BLUFFE, SILVIA, LUCY, *and* SETTER.

Bluffe. All injuries, whatsoever, Mr. Sharper.

Sir Jo. Ay, ay, whatsoever, captain, stick to that; whatsoever.

Sharp. 'Tis done, these gentlemen are witnesses to the general release.

Vain. Ay, ay, to this instant moment: I have passed an act of oblivion.

Bluffe. 'Tis very generous, sir, since I needs must own—

Sir Jo. No, no, captain, you need not own, heh! heh! heh! 'tis I must own—

Bluffe. That you are overreached too, ha! ha! ha! only a little art-military used—only undermined, or so, as shall appear by the fair Araminta, my wife's permission.—[LUCY *unmasks.*] Oh, the devil, cheated at last!

Sir Jo. Only a little art-military trick, captain, only countermined, or so.—Mr. Vainlove, I suppose you know whom I have got now? But all's forgiven.

Vain. I know whom you have not got; pray, ladies, convince him.

[ARAMINTA *and* BELINDA *unmask.*

Sir Jo. Ah! O Lord, my heart aches!—Ah, Setter, a rogue of all sides!

Sharp. Sir Joseph, you had better have pre-engaged this gentleman's pardon; for though Vainlove be so generous to forgive the loss of his mistress, I know not how Heartwell may take the loss of his wife. [SILVIA *unmasks.*

Heart. My wife! by this light 'tis she, the very cockatrice!—Oh, Sharper, let me embrace thee! But art thou sure she is really married to him?

Set. Really and lawfully married, I am witness.

Sharp. Bellmour will unriddle to you.

[HEARTWELL *goes to* BELLMOUR.

Sir Jo. Pray, madam, who are you? for I find you and I are like to be better acquainted.

Silv. The worst of me is, that I am your wife.

Sharp. Come, sir Joseph, your fortune is not so bad as you fear:—a fine lady, and a lady of very good quality.

Sir Jo. Thanks to my knighthood, she's a lady.

Vain. That deserves a fool with a better title.—Pray use her as my relation, or you shall hear on't.

Bluffe. What! are you a woman of quality too, spouse?

Set. And my relation: pray let her be respected accordingly.—Well, honest Lucy, fare thee well. I think you and I have been playfellows off and on any time this seven years.

Lucy. Hold your prating!—I'm thinking what vocation I shall follow while my spouse is planting laurels in the wars.

Bluffe. No more wars, spouse, no more wars!—while I plant laurels for my head abroad, I may find the branches sprout at home.

Heart. Bellmour, I approve thy mirth, and thank thee; and I cannot in gratitude (for I see which way thou art going) see thee fall into the same snare out of which thou hast delivered me.

Bell. I thank thee, George, for thy good intention; but there is a fatality in marriage—for I find I'm resolute.

Heart. Then good counsel will be thrown away upon you.—For my part, I have once escaped, and when I wed again, may she be ugly as an old bawd.

Vain. Ill-natured as an old maid—

Bell. Wanton as a young widow—

Sharp. And jealous as a barren wife.

Heart. Agreed.

Bell. Well, 'midst of these dreadful denunciations, and notwithstanding the warning and example before me, I commit myself to lasting durance.

Belin. Prisoner, make much of your fetters.

[*Giving her hand.*

Bell. Frank, will you keep us in countenance?

Vain. May I presume to hope so great a blessing?

Aram. We had better take the advantage of a little of our friends' experience first.

Bell. [*Aside.*] O' my conscience she dares not consent, for fear he should recant.—[*Aloud.*] Well, we shall have your company to church in the morning; may be it may get you an appetite to see us fall to before ye.—Setter, did not you tell me—

Set. They're at the door, I'll call 'em in.

A Dance.

Bell. Now set we forward on a journey for life.—Come, take your fellow-travellers.—Old George, I'm sorry to see thee still plod on alone.

Heart. With gaudy plumes and gingling bells made proud,
The youthful beast sets forth, and neighs aloud.
A morning sun his tinsell'd harness gilds,
And the first stage a down-hill green-sward yields.
But oh—
What rugged ways attend the noon of life!
Our sun declines, and with what anxious strife,
What pain we tug that galling load, a wife!
All coursers the first heat with vigour run;
But 'tis with whip and spur the race is won.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY MRS. BARRY.

As a rash girl, who will all hazards run,
And be enjoy'd, though sure to be undone;
Soon as her curiosity is over,
Would give the world she could her toy recover;
So fares it with our poet, and I'm sent
To tell you he already does repent:
Would you were all as forward to keep Lent!
Now the deed's done, the giddy thing has leisure
To think o' th' sting that's in the tail of pleasure.
Methinks I hear him in consideration:—
"What will the world say? where's my reputation?
Now that's at stake"—No, fool, 'tis out of fashion.
If loss of that should follow want of wit,
How many undone men were in the pit!
Why, that's some comfort to an author's fears,
If he's an ass, he will be tried by's peers.
But hold—I am exceeding my commission:
My business here was humbly to petition;
But we're so used to rail on these occasions,
I could not help one trial of your patience:
For 'tis our way (you know) for fear o' th' worst,
To be beforehand still, and cry fool first.
How say you, sparks? how do you stand affected?
I swear, young Bays within is so dejected,
'Twould grieve your hearts to see him; shall I call him?
But then you cruel critics would so maul him!
Yet, may be you'll encourage a beginner;
But how?—Just as the devil does a sinner.
Women and wits are used e'en much at one,
You gain your end, and damn 'em when you've done.

THE DOUBLE-DEALER.

A Comedy.

Interdum tamen, et vocem Comœdia tollit.—HORAT. Ars Poet.

Syrus. Huic equidem consilio palmam do: hic me magnifice effero,
Qui vim tantam in me, et potestatem habeam tantæ astutiæ,
Vera dicendo ut eos ambos fallam.—TERENT. Heauton.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES MONTAGUE,

ONE OF THE LORDS OF THE TREASURY.

SIR,—I heartily wish that this play were as perfect as I intended it, that it might be more worthy your acceptance; and that my dedication of it to you might be more becoming that honour and esteem which I, with everybody who is so fortunate as to know you, have for you. It had your countenance when yet unknown; and now it is made public, it wants your protection.

I would not have anybody imagine that I think this play without its faults, for I am conscious of several. I confess I designed (whatever vanity or ambition occasioned that design) to have written a true and regular comedy: but I found it an undertaking which put me in mind of—*Sudet multum, frustraque laboret ausus idem.* And now, to make amends for the vanity of such a design, I do confess both the attempt, and the imperfect performance. Yet I must take the boldness to say, I have not miscarried in the whole; for the mechanical part of it is regular. That I may say with as little vanity, as a builder may say he has built a house according to the model laid down before him; or a gardener that he has set his flowers in a knot of such or such a figure. I designed the moral first, and to that moral I invented the fable, and do not know that I have borrowed one hint of it anywhere. I made the plot as strong as I could, because it was single; and I made it single, because I would avoid confusion, and was resolved to preserve the three unities of the drama. Sir, this discourse is very impertinent to you, whose judgment much better can discern the faults, than I can excuse them; and whose good-nature, like that of a lover, will find out those hidden beauties (if there are any such) which it would be great immodesty for me to discover. I think I do not speak improperly when I call you a lover of poetry; for it is very well known she has been a very kind mistress to you: she has not denied you the last favour; and she has been fruitful to you in a most beautiful issue.—If I break off abruptly here, I hope everybody will understand that it is to avoid a commendation, which, as it is your due, would be most easy for me to pay, and too troublesome for you to receive.

I have, since the acting of this play, hearkened after the objections which have been made to it; for I was conscious where a true critic might have put me upon my defence. I was prepared for the attack; and am pretty confident I could have vindicated some parts, and excused others; and where there were any plain miscarriages, I would most ingenuously have confessed them. But I have not heard anything said sufficient to provoke an answer. That which looks most like an objection, does not relate in particular to this play, but to all or most that ever have been written; and that is, soliloquy. Therefore I will answer it, not only for my own sake, but to save others the trouble, to whom it may hereafter be objected.

I grant, that for a man to talk to himself appears absurd and unnatural; and indeed it is so in most cases; but the circumstances which may attend the occasion make great alteration. It oftentimes happens to a man to have designs which require him to himself, and in their nature cannot admit of a confidant. Such, for certain, is all villany; and other less mischievous intentions may be very improper to be communicated to a second person. In such a case, therefore, the audience must observe, whether the person upon the stage takes any notice of them at all, or no. For if he supposes any one to be by when he talks to himself, it is monstrous and ridiculous to the last degree. Nay, not only in this case, but in any part of a play, if there is expressed any knowledge of an audience, it is insufferable. But otherwise, when a man in soliloquy reasons with himself, and *pro's* and *con's*, and weighs all his designs, we ought not to imagine that this man either talks to us, or to himself; he is only thinking, and thinking such matter as were inexcusable folly in him to speak. But because we are concealed spectators of the plot in agitation, and the poet finds it necessary to let us know the whole mystery of his contrivance, he is willing to inform us of this person's thoughts; and to that end is forced to make use of the expedient of speech, no other better way being yet invented for the communication of thought.

Another very wrong objection has been made by some, who have not taken leisure to distinguish the characters. The hero of the play, as they are pleased to call him, (meaning Mellefont,) is a gull, and made a fool, and cheated. Is every man a gull and a fool that is deceived? At that rate I am afraid the two classes of men will be reduced to one, and the knaves themselves be at a loss to justify their title: but if an open-hearted honest man, who has an entire confidence in one whom he takes to be his friend, and whom he has obliged to be so; and who (to confirm him in his opinion) in all appearance, and upon several trials has been so; if this man be deceived by the treachery of the other, must he of necessity commence fool immediately, only because the other has proved a villain? Ay, but there was caution given to Mellefont in the first Act by his friend Careless. Of what nature was that caution? Only to give the

audience some light into the character of Maskwell, before his appearance; and not to convince Mellefont of his treachery; for that was more than Careless was then able to do; he never knew Maskwell guilty of any villany; he was only a sort of man which he did not like. As for his suspecting his familiarity with my Lady Touchwood; let them examine the answer that Mellefont makes him, and compare it with the conduct of Maskwell's character through the play.

I would beg them again to look into the character of Maskwell, before they accuse Mellefont of weakness for being deceived by him. For upon summing up the inquiry into this objection, it may be found they have mistaken cunning in one character, for folly in another.

But there is one thing at which I am more concerned than all the false criticisms that are made upon me; and that is, some of the ladies are offended. I am heartily sorry for it, for I declare I would rather disoblige all the critics in the world, than one of the fair sex. They are concerned that I have represented some women vicious and affected: how can I help it? It is the business of a comic poet to paint the vices and follies of humankind; and there are but two sexes, male and female, men and women, which have a title to humanity: and if I leave one half of them out, the work will be imperfect. I should be very glad of an opportunity to make my compliment to those ladies who are offended; but they can no more expect it in a comedy, than to be tickled by a surgeon when he is letting them blood. They who are virtuous or discreet should not be offended; for such characters as these distinguish *them*, and make their beauties more shining and observed: and they who are of the other kind, may nevertheless pass for such, by seeming not to be displeased, or touched with the satire of this comedy. Thus have they also wrongfully accused me of doing them a prejudice, when I have in reality done them a service.

You will pardon me, Sir, for the freedom I take of making answers to other people, in an epistle which ought wholly to be sacred to you: but since I intend the play to be so too, I hope I may take the more liberty of justifying it, where it is in the right.

I must now, Sir, declare to the world how kind you have been to my endeavours; for in regard of what was well meant, you have excused what was ill performed. I beg you would continue the same method in your acceptance of this dedication. I know no other way of making a return to that humanity you showed, in protecting an infant, but by enrolling it in your service, now that it is of age and come into the world. Therefore be pleased to accept of this as an acknowledgment of the favour you have shown me, and an earnest of the real service and gratitude of, Sir, your most obliged, humble servant,

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MASKWELL, *a Villain; pretended Friend to* MELLEFONT, *Gallant to* LADY TOUCHWOOD, *and in love with* CYNTHIA.
LORD TOUCHWOOD, *Uncle to* MELLEFONT.
MELLEFONT, *promised to and in love with* CYNTHIA.
CARELESS, *his Friend.*
LORD FROTH, *a solemn Coxcomb.*
BRISK, *a pert Coxcomb.*
SIR PAUL PLYANT, *an uxorious, foolish, old Knight; brother to* LADY TOUCHWOOD, *and Father to* CYNTHIA.
SAYGRACE, *Chaplain to* LORD TOUCHWOOD.

LADY TOUCHWOOD, *in love with* MELLEFONT.
CYNTHIA, *Daughter to* SIR PAUL *by a former Wife, promised to* MELLEFONT.
LADY FROTH, *a great Coquette; pretender to poetry, wit, and learning.*
LADY PLYANT, *insolent to her Husband, and easy to any pretender.*

Boy, Footmen, *and* Attendants.

SCENE,—A GALLERY IN LORD TOUCHWOOD'S HOUSE, WITH CHAMBERS ADJOINING.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MRS. BRACEGIRDLE.

MOORS have this way (as story tells) to know
Whether their brats are truly got or no;
Into the sea the new-born babe is thrown,
There, as instinct directs, to swim or drown.
A barbarous device to try if spouse
Has kept religiously her nuptial vows.
  Such are the trials poets make of plays:
Only they trust to more inconstant seas;
So does our author this his child commit
To the tempestuous mercy of the pit,
To know if it be truly born of wit.
  Critics, avaunt! for you are fish of prey,
And feed, like sharks, upon an infant play.
Be every monster of the deep away;
Let's a fair trial have, and a clear sea.
  Let Nature work, and do not damn too soon,
For life will struggle long ere it sink down;
And will at least rise thrice before it drown.
Let us consider, had it been our fate,
Thus hardly to be proved legitimate!
I will not say, we'd all in danger been,
Were each to suffer for his mother's sin;
But, by my troth, I cannot avoid thinking
How nearly some good men might have 'scaped sinking.
But Heaven be praised this custom is confined
Alone to the offspring of the Muses' kind:
Our christian cuckolds are more bent to pity;
I know not one Moor husband in the city.
I' th' good man's arms the chopping bastard thrives;
For he thinks all his own that is his wife's.
  Whatever fate is for this play design'd,
The poet's sure he shall some comfort find:
For if his muse has play'd him false, the worst
That can befal him, is to be divorced;
You husbands judge, if that be to be cursed.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Gallery in* Lord Touchwood's *House, with Chambers adjoining.*

Enter Careless, *crossing the stage, with his hat, gloves, and sword, in his hands; as just risen from table;* Mellefont *following him.*

Mel. Ned, Ned, whither so fast? what, turned flincher? why, you won't leave us?

Care. Where are the women? I'm weary of guzzling, and begin to think them the better company.

Mel. Then thy reason staggers, and thou'rt almost drunk.

Care. No, faith, but your fools grow noisy; and if a man must endure the noise of words without sense, I think the women have more musical voices, and become nonsense better.

Mel. Why, they are at the end of the gallery, retired to their tea and scandal, according to their ancient custom, after dinner; but I made a pretence to follow you, because I had something to say to you in private, and I am not like to have many opportunities this evening.

Care. And here's this coxcomb most critically come to interrupt you.

SCENE II.

Careless, Mellefont, *and* Brisk.

Brisk. Boys, boys, lads, where are you? What, do you give ground! mortgage for a bottle, ha? Careless, this is your trick; you're always spoiling company by leaving it.

Care. And thou art always spoiling company by coming into't.

Brisk. Pooh! ha! ha! ha! I know you envy me: spite, proud spite, by the gods! and burning envy.—I'll be judged by Mellefont here, who gives and takes raillery better, you or I. Pshaw, man! when I say you spoil company by leaving it, I mean you leave nobody for the company to laugh at. I think there I was with you, ha? Mellefont.

Mel. O' my word, Brisk, that was a home-thrust: you have silenced him.

Brisk. Oh, my dear Mellefont, let me perish, if thou art not the soul of conversation, the very essence of wit, and spirit of wine!—The deuse take me, if there were three good things said, or one understood, since thy amputation from the body of our society.—He! I think that's pretty and metaphorical enough: egad I could not have said it out of thy company:—Careless, ha?

Care. Hum, ay, what is't?

Brisk. O, *mon cœur!* what is't? Nay gad I'll punish you for want of apprehension: the deuse take me if I tell you.

Mel. No, no, hang him, he has no taste.—But, dear Brisk, excuse me, I have a little business.

Care. Prithee get thee gone; thou seest we are serious.

Mel. We'll come immediately, if you'll but go in, and keep up good-humour and sense in the company: prithee do, they'll fall asleep else.

Brisk. Egad, so they will!—Well I will, I will, gad, you shall command me from the zenith to the nadir.—But the deuse take me if I say a good thing till you come.—But prithee, dear rogue, make haste, prithee make haste, I shall burst else.—And yonder's your uncle, my lord Touchwood, swears he'll disinherit you, and sir Paul Plyant threatens to disclaim you for a son-in-law, and my lord Froth won't dance at your wedding to-morrow; nor, the deuse take me, I won't write your epithalamium—and see what a condition you're like to be brought to.

Mel. Well, I'll speak but three words, and follow you.

Brisk. Enough, enough.—Careless, bring your apprehension along with you.

SCENE III.

Mellefont *and* Careless.

Care. Pert coxcomb!

Mel. Faith, 'tis a good-natured coxcomb, and has very entertaining follies: you must be more humane to him; at this juncture, it will do me service. I'll tell you, I would have mirth continued this day at any rate; though patience purchase folly, and attention be paid with noise: there are times when sense may be unseasonable, as well as truth. Prithee, do thou wear none to-day; but allow Brisk to have wit, that thou mayst seem a fool.

Care. Why, how now! why this extravagant proposition?

Mel. O, I would have no room for serious design, for I am jealous of a plot. I would have noise and impertinence keep my lady Touchwood's head from working; for hell is not more busy than her brain, nor contains more devils than that imaginations.

Care. I thought your fear of her had been over. Is not to-morrow appointed for your marriage with Cynthia; and her father, sir Paul Plyant, come to settle the writings this day, on purpose?

Mel. True; but you shall judge whether I have not reason to be alarmed. None besides you and Maskwell are acquainted with the secret of my aunt Touchwood's violent passion for me. Since my first refusal of her addresses, she has endeavoured to do me all ill offices with my uncle; yet has managed 'em with that subtlety, that to him they have borne the face of kindness; while her malice, like a dark lantern, only shone upon me where it was directed. Still it gave me less perplexity to prevent the success of her displeasure, than to avoid the importunities of her love; and of two evils, I thought myself favoured in her aversion: but whether urged by her despair, and the short prospect of the time she saw to accomplish her designs; whether the hopes of revenge, or of her love, terminated in the view of this my marriage with Cynthia, I know not; but this morning she surprised me in my bed.

Care. Was there ever such a fury! 'tis well

Nature has not put it into her sex's power to ravish.—Well, bless us! proceed. What followed?

Mel. What at first amazed me: for I looked to have seen her in all the transports of a slighted and revengeful woman: but when I expected thunder from her voice, and lightning in her eyes; I saw her melted into tears and hushed into a sigh. It was long before either of us spoke; passion had tied her tongue, and amazement mine.—In short, the consequence was thus, she omitted nothing that the most violent love could urge, or tender words express; which when she saw had no effect, but still I pleaded honour and nearness of blood to my uncle, then came the storm I feared at first: for starting from my bed-side like a fury, she flew to my sword, and with much ado I prevented her doing me or herself a mischief. Having disarmed her, in a gust of passion she left me, and in a resolution, confirmed by a thousand curses, not to close her eyes till they had seen my ruin.

Care. Exquisite woman! but what the devil, does she think thou hast no more sense, than to get an heir upon her body to disinherit thyself? for, as I take it, this settlement upon you is with a proviso, that your uncle have no children.

Mel. It is so. Well, the service you are to do me, will be a pleasure to yourself; I must get you to engage my lady Plyant all this evening, that my pious aunt may not work her to her interest. And if you chance to secure her to yourself, you may incline her to mine. She's handsome, and knows it; is very silly, and thinks she has sense, and has an old fond husband.

Care. I confess, a very fair foundation for a lover to build upon.

Mel. For my lord Froth, he and his wife will be sufficiently taken up with admiring one another, and Brisk's gallantry, as they call it. I'll observe my uncle myself: and Jack Maskwell has promised me to watch my aunt narrowly, and give me notice upon any suspicion. As for sir Paul, my wife's father-in-law that is to be, my dear Cynthia has such a share in his fatherly fondness, he would scarce make her a moment uneasy, to have her happy hereafter.

Care. So, you have manned your works: but I wish you may not have the weakest guard where the enemy is strongest.

Mel. Maskwell you mean; prithee, why should you suspect him?

Care. Faith, I cannot help it, you know I never liked him; I am a little superstitious in physiognomy.

Mel. He has obligations of gratitude to bind him to me; his dependence upon my uncle is through my means.

Care. Upon your aunt you mean.

Mel. My aunt?

Care. I'm mistaken if there be not a familiarity between them you do not suspect, notwithstanding her passion for you.

Mel. Pooh, pooh, nothing in the world but his design to do me service; and he endeavours to be well in her esteem, that he may be able to effect it.

Care. Well, I shall be glad to be mistaken; but your aunt's aversion in her revenge cannot be any way so effectually shown as in bringing forth a child to disinherit you. She is handsome and cunning, and naturally wanton: Maskwell is flesh and blood at best, and opportunities between them are frequent. His affection to you, you have confessed, is grounded upon his interest; that you have transplanted; and should it take root in my lady, I don't see what you can expect from the fruit.

Mel. I confess the consequence is visible, were your suspicions just.—But see, the company is broke up, let's meet 'em.

SCENE IV.

CARELESS, MELLEFONT, LORD TOUCHWOOD, LORD FROTH, SIR PAUL PLYANT, and BRISK.

Lord Touch. Out upon't, nephew!—leave your father-in-law and me to maintain our ground against young people!

Mel. I beg your lordship's pardon; we were just returning.

Sir Paul. Were you, son? gadsbud, much better as it is.—Good, strange! I swear I'm almost tipsy—t'other bottle would have been too powerful for me,—as sure as can be it would.—We wanted your company; but Mr. Brisk—where is he? I swear and vow he's a most facetious person,—and the best company.—And, my lord Froth, your lordship is so merry a man, he! he! he!

Lord Froth. O foy, sir Paul! what do you mean? Merry! O barbarous! I'd as lieve you call'd me fool.

Sir Paul. Nay, I protest and vow now, 'tis true; when Mr. Brisk jokes, your lordship's laugh does so become you, he! he! he!

Lord Froth. Ridiculous! sir Paul, you're strangely mistaken, I find champagne is powerful. I assure you, sir Paul, I laugh at nobody's jest but my own or a lady's; I assure you, sir Paul.

Brisk. How? how, my lord? what, affront my wit! let me perish, do I never say anything worthy to be laughed at?

Lord Froth. O foy! don't misapprehend me, I don't say so, for I often smile at your conceptions. But there is nothing more unbecoming a man of quality than to laugh; 'tis such a vulgar expression of the passion! everybody can laugh. Then, especially to laugh at the jest of an inferior person, or when anybody else of the same quality does not laugh with one; ridiculous! To be pleased with what pleases the crowd! Now when I laugh, I always laugh alone.

Brisk. I suppose, that's because you laugh at your own jests, egad, ha! ha! ha!

Lord Froth. He! he! I swear, though, your raillery provokes me to a smile.

Brisk. Ay, my lord, 'tis a sign I hit you in the teeth if you show 'em.

Lord Froth. He! he! he! I swear that's so very pretty, I can't forbear.

Care. I find a quibble bears more sway in your lordship's face than a jest.

Lord Touch. Sir Paul, if you please we'll retire to the ladies, and drink a dish of tea, to settle our heads.

Sir Paul. With all my heart.—Mr. Brisk, you'll come to us,—or call me when you joke; I'll be ready to laugh incontinently.

SCENE V.

MELLEFONT, CARELESS, Lord FROTH, *and* BRISK.

Mel. But does your lordship never see comedies?

Lord Froth. O yes, sometimes;—but I never laugh.

Mel. No!

Lord Froth. O no;—never laugh indeed, sir.

Care. No! why, what d'ye go there for?

Lord Froth. To distinguish myself from the commonalty, and mortify the poets: the fellows grow so conceited when any of their foolish wit prevails upon the side-boxes,—I swear—he! he! he! I have often constrained my inclinations to laugh, —he! he! he! to avoid giving them encouragement.

Mel. You are cruel to yourself, my lord, as well as malicious to them.

Lord Froth. I confess I did myself some violence at first; but now I think I have conquered it.

Brisk. Let me perish, my lord, but there is something very particular in the humour! 'Tis true, it makes against wit, and I'm sorry for some friends of mine that write, but, egad, I love to be malicious. Nay, deuse take me, there's wit in't too: and wit must be foiled by wit; cut a diamond with a diamond; no other way, egad!

Lord Froth. Oh, I thought you would not be long before you found out the wit.

Care. Wit! in what? where the devil's the wit in not laughing when a man has a mind to't?

Brisk. O Lord, why, can't you find it out?—Why, there 'tis, in the not laughing;—don't you apprehend me?—[*Aside to* FROTH.] My lord, Careless is a very honest fellow, but harkee,—you understand me, somewhat heavy, a little shallow, or so.—[*Aloud.*] Why, I'll tell you now. Suppose now you come up to me—nay, prithee, Careless, be instructed—suppose, as I was saying, you come up to me holding your sides, and laughing, as if you would—Well—I look grave, and ask the cause of this immoderate mirth—you laugh on still, and are not able to tell me.—Still I look grave, not so much as smile.

Care. Smile! no; what the devil should you smile at, when you suppose I can't tell you?

Brisk. Pshaw! pshaw! prithee, don't interrupt me.—But I tell you, you shall tell me—at last—but it shall be a great while first.

Care. Well, but prithee don't let it be a great while, because I long to have it over.

Brisk. Well, then, you tell me some good jest, or very witty thing, laughing all the while as if you were ready to die, and I hear it, and look thus.—Would not you be disappointed?

Care. No; for if it were a witty thing, I should not expect you to understand it.

Lord Froth. O foy, Mr. Careless! all the world allows Mr. Brisk to have wit, my wife says he has a great deal. I hope you think her a judge.

Brisk. Pooh, my lord, his voice goes for nothing! I can't tell how to make him apprehend.—[*To* CARELESS.] Take it t'other way:—suppose I say a witty thing to you?

Care. Then I shall be disappointed indeed.

Mel. Let him alone, Brisk, he is obstinately bent not to be instructed.

Brisk. I'm sorry for him, the deuse take me!

Mel. Shall we go to the ladies, my lord?

Lord Froth. With all my heart, methinks we are a solitude without 'em.

Mel. Or, what say you to another bottle of champagne?

Lord Froth. O, for the universe, not a drop more I beseech you!—Oh intemperate! I have a flushing in my face already.

[*Takes out a pocket-glass, and looks in it.*

Brisk. Let me see, let me see, my lord! I broke my glass that was in the lid of my snuff-box. Hum! deuse take me, I have encouraged a pimple here too. [*Takes the glass, and looks.*

Lord Froth. Then you must mortify him with a patch; my wife shall supply you. Come, gentlemen, *allons*, here is company coming.

SCENE VI.

Lady TOUCHWOOD *and* MASKWELL.

Lady Touch. I'll hear no more! y'are false and ungrateful. Come, I know you false.

Mask. I have been frail, I confess, madam, for your ladyship's service.

Lady Touch. That I should trust a man whom I had known betray his friend!

Mask. What friend have I betrayed? or to whom?

Lady Touch. Your fond friend Mellefont, and to me; can you deny it?

Mask. I do not.

Lady Touch. Have you not wronged my lord, who has been a father to you in your wants, and given you being? Have you not wronged him in the highest manner, in his bed?

Mask. With your ladyship's help, and for your service, as I told you before. I can't deny that neither.—Anything more, madam?

Lady Touch. More! audacious villain! O, what's more, is most my shame!—Have you not dishonoured me?

Mask. No, that I deny; for I never told in all my life: so that accusation's answered; on to the next.

Lady Touch. Death, do you dally with my passion? Insolent devil! But have a care;—provoke me not; for, by the eternal fire, you shall not 'scape my vengeance!—Calm villain! How unconcerned he stands, confessing treachery and ingratitude! Is there a vice more black!—O, I have excuses, thousands for my faults! fire in my temper, passions in my soul, apt to every provocation; oppressed at once with love and with despair. But a sedate, a thinking villain, whose black blood runs temperately bad, what excuse can clear?

Mask. Will you be in temper, madam? I would not talk not to be heard. I have been—[*She walks about disordered*] a very great rogue for your sake, and you reproach me with it; I am ready to be a rogue still to do you service; and you are flinging conscience and honour in my face to rebate my inclinations. How am I to behave myself? You know I am your creature, my life and fortune in your power; to disoblige you brings me certain ruin. Allow it, I would betray you, I would not be a traitor to myself: I don't pretend to honesty, because you know I am a rascal: but I would convince you from the necessity of my being firm to you.

Lady Touch. Necessity, impudence! Can no gratitude incline you, no obligations touch you? Have not my fortune and my person been subjected to your pleasure? Were you not in the nature of a servant, and have not I in effect made you lord of all, of me, and of my lord? Where is that humble love, the languishing, that adoration, which once was paid me, and everlastingly engaged?

Mask. Fixed, rooted in my heart, whence nothing can remove 'em, yet you—

Lady Touch. Yet! what yet?

Mask. Nay, misconceive me not, madam, when I say I have had a generous and a faithful passion, which you had never favoured, but through revenge and policy.

Lady Touch. Ha!

Mask. Look you, madam, we are alone: pray contain yourself, and hear me. You know you loved your nephew, when I first sighed for you; I quickly found it; an argument that I loved; for with that art you veiled your passion, 'twas imperceptible to all but jealous eyes. This discovery made me bold: I confess it; for by it I thought you in my power. Your nephew's scorn of you added to my hopes; I watched the occasion and took you, just repulsed by him, warm at once with love and indignation; your disposition, my arguments, and happy opportunity, accomplished my design; I pressed the yielding minute, and was blessed. How I have loved you since words have not shown, then how should words express?

Lady Touch. Well, mollifying devil!—and have I not met your love with forward fire?

Mask. Your zeal, I grant, was ardent, but misplaced; there was revenge in view: that woman's idol had defiled the temple of the god, and love was made a mock-worship.—A son and heir would have edged young Mellefont upon the brink of ruin, and left him none but you to catch at for prevention.

Lady Touch. Again, provoke me! Do you wind me like a 'larum, only to rouse my own stilled soul for your diversion? Confusion!

Mask. Nay, madam, I'm gone, if you relapse.—What needs this? I say nothing but what you yourself, in open hours of love, have told me. Why should you deny it? nay, how can you? Is not all this present heat owing to the same fire? Do you not love him still? How have I this day offended you, but in not breaking off his match with Cynthia? which ere to-morrow shall be done,—had you but patience.

Lady Touch. How, what said you, Maskwell?—Another caprice to unwind my temper?

Mask. By Heaven, no! I am your slave, the slave of all your pleasures; and will not rest till I have given you peace, would you suffer me.

Lady Touch. O, Maskwell, in vain I do disguise me from thee! thou knowest me, knowest the very inmost windings and recesses of my soul.—Oh Mellefont! I burn.—Married to-morrow!—Despair strikes me. Yet my soul knows I hate him too: let him but once be mine, and next immediate ruin seize him.

Mask. Compose yourself, you shall possess and ruin him too.—Will that please you?

Lady Touch. How, how? thou dear, thou precious villain, how?

Mask. You have already been tampering with my lady Plyant?

Lady Touch. I have: she is ready for any impression I think fit.

Mask. She must be thoroughly persuaded that Mellefont loves her.

Lady Touch. She is so credulous that way naturally, and likes him so well, that she will believe it faster than I can persuade her. But I don't see what you can propose from such a trifling design; for her first conversing with Mellefont will convince her of the contrary.

Mask. I know it.—I don't depend upon it.—But it will prepare something else; and gain us leisure to lay a stronger plot: if I gain a little time I shall not want contrivance.

One minute gives invention to destroy;
What to rebuild, will a whole age employ.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Gallery in* LORD TOUCHWOOD'S *House.*

LADY FROTH *and* CYNTHIA.

Cyn. Indeed, madam! Is it possible your ladyship could have been so much in love?

Lady Froth. I could not sleep; I did not sleep one wink for three weeks together.

Cyn. Prodigious! I wonder want of sleep, and so much love, and so much wit as your ladyship has, did not turn your brain.

Lady Froth. O my dear Cynthia, you must not rally your friend.—But really, as you say, I wonder too;—but then I had a way: for between you and I, I had whimsies and vapours, but I gave them vent.

Cyn. How pray, madam?

Lady Froth. O I writ, writ abundantly;—do you never write?

Cyn. Write what?

Lady Froth. Songs, elegies, satires, encomiums, panegyrics, lampoons, plays, or heroic poems.

Cyn. O Lord, not I, madam; I'm content to be a courteous reader.

Lady Froth. O inconsistent! in love, and not write! if my lord and I had been both of your temper, we had never come together.—O bless me! what a sad thing would that have been, if my lord and I should never have met!

Cyn. Then neither my lord nor you would ever have met with your match, on my conscience.

Lady Froth. O' my conscience, no more we should; thou sayest right: for sure my lord Froth is as fine a gentleman and as much a man of quality! Ah, nothing at all of the common air!—I think I may say he wants nothing but a blue ribbon and a star to make him shine, the very phosphorus of our hemisphere. Do you understand

those two hard words? if you don't, I'll explain 'em to you.

Cyn. Yes, yes, madam, I'm not so ignorant.—[*Aside.*] At least I won't own it, to be troubled with your instructions.

Lady Froth. Nay, I beg your pardon; but being derived from the Greek, I thought you might have escaped the etymology.—But I'm the more amazed to find you a woman of letters, and not write! bless me! how can Mellefont believe you love him?

Cyn. Why faith, madam, he that won't take my word, shall never have it under my hand.

Lady Froth. I vow Mellefont's a pretty gentleman, but methinks he wants a manner.

Cyn. A manner! what's that, madam?

Lady Froth. Some distinguishing quality, as for example, the *bel air* or *brillant* of Mr. Brisk; the solemnity, yet complaisance of my lord, or something of his own that should look a little *je ne sai quoi*; he is too much a mediocrity, in my mind.

Cyn. He does not indeed affect either pertness or formality, for which I like him. Here he comes.

Lady Froth. And my lord with him; pray, observe the difference.

SCENE II.

Lady Froth, Cynthia, Lord Froth, Mellefont, *and* Brisk.

Cyn. Impertinent creature! I could almost be angry with her now. [*Aside.*

Lady Froth. My lord, I have been telling Cynthia how much I have been in love with you, I swear I have; I'm not ashamed to own it now. Ah, it makes my heart leap! I vow, I sigh when I think on't; my dear lord, ha! ha! ha! do you remember, my lord?

[*Squeezes him by the hand, looks kindly on him, sighs, and then laughs out.*

Lord Froth. Pleasant creature! perfectly well.—Ah, that look! ay, there it is! who could resist? 'twas so my heart was made a captive first, and ever since 't has been in love with happy slavery.

Lady Froth. O that tongue! that dear deceitful tongue! that charming softness in your mien and your expression! and then your bow! Good, my lord, bow as you did when I gave you my picture: here, suppose this my picture.—[*Gives him a pocket-glass.*] Pray mind, my lord; ah, he bows charmingly!—Nay, my lord, you shan't kiss it so much, I shall grow jealous, I vow now.

[*He bows profoundly low, then kisses the glass.*

Lord Froth. I saw myself there, and kissed it for your sake.

Lady Froth. Ah, gallantry to the last degree!—Mr. Brisk, you're a judge; was ever anything so well bred as my lord?

Brisk. Never anything but your ladyship, let me perish!

Lady Froth. Oh, prettily turned again! let me die, but you have a great deal of wit!—Mr. Mellefont, don't you think Mr. Brisk has a world of wit?

Mel. O yes, madam!

Brisk. O dear, madam!—

Lady Froth. An infinite deal?

Brisk. O heavens, madam!—

Lady Froth. More wit than anybody?

Brisk. I'm everlastingly your humble servant, deuse take me, madam.

Lord Froth. [*To* Cynthia.] Don't you think us a happy couple?

Cyn. I vow, my lord, I think you the happiest couple in the world; for you're not only happy in one another and when you are together, but happy in yourselves, and by yourselves.

Lord Froth. I hope Mellefont will make a good husband too.

Cyn. 'Tis my interest to believe he will, my lord.

Lord Froth. D'ye think he'll love you as well as I do my wife? I'm afraid not.

Cyn. I believe he'll love me better.

Lord Froth. Heavens! that can never be; but why do you think so?

Cyn. Because he has not so much reason to be fond of himself.

Lord Froth. Oh, your humble servant for that, dear madam.—Well, Mellefont, you'll be a happy creature.

Mel. Ay, my lord, I shall have the same reason for my happiness that your lordship has, I shall think myself happy.

Lord Froth. Ah, that's all.

Brisk. [*To* Lady Froth.] Your ladyship's in the right; but, egad, I'm wholly turned into satire. I confess I write but seldom, but when I do—keen iambics, egad! But my lord was telling me, your ladyship has made an essay toward an heroic poem.

Lady Froth. Did my lord tell you? yes, I vow, and the subject is my lord's love to me. And what do you think I call it? I dare swear you won't guess—*The Sillabub;* ha! ha! ha!

Brisk. Because my lord's title's Froth, egad; ha! ha! ha! deuse take me, very *à propos* and surprising, ha! ha! ha!

Lady Froth. He! ay, is not it?—And then I call my lord Spumoso, and myself—what d'ye think I call myself?

Brisk. Lactilla, maybe:—'gad, I cannot tell.

Lady Froth. Biddy, that's all; just my own name.

Brisk. Biddy! egad, very pretty!—Deuse take me, if your ladyship has not the art of surprising the most naturally in the world!—I hope you'll make me happy in communicating the poem.

Lady Froth. O you must be my confidant, I must ask your advice.

Brisk. I'm your humble servant, let me perish!—I presume your ladyship has read Bossu?

Lady Froth. O yes, and Rapin, and Dacier upon Aristotle and Horace.—My lord, you must not be jealous, I'm communicating all to Mr. Brisk.

Lord Froth. No, no, I'll allow Mr. Brisk; have you nothing about you to show him, my dear?

Lady Froth. Yes, I believe I have.—Mr. Brisk, come, will you go into the next room, and there I'll show you what I have.

Lord Froth. I'll walk a turn in the garden, and come to you.

SCENE III.

Mellefont *and* Cynthia.

Mel. You're thoughtful, Cynthia?

Cyn. I'm thinking, though marriage makes man

and wife one flesh, it leaves them still two fools; and they become more conspicuous by setting off one another.

Mel. That's only when two fools meet, and their follies are opposed.

Cyn. Nay, I have known two wits meet, and by the opposition of their wit, render themselves as ridiculous as fools. 'Tis an odd game we're going to play at; what think you of drawing stakes, and giving over in time?

Mel. No, hang't, that's not endeavouring to win, because it's possible we may lose; since we have shuffled and cut, let's e'en turn up trump now.

Cyn. Then I find it's like cards: if either of us have a good hand, it is an accident of fortune.

Mel. No, marriage is rather like a game at bowls; Fortune indeed makes the match, and the two nearest, and sometimes the two farthest, are together; but the game depends entirely upon judgment.

Cyn. Still it is a game, and consequently one of us must be a loser.

Mel. Not at all; only a friendly trial of skill, and the winnings to be laid out in an entertainment. — What's here, the music! — [*Musicians crossing the stage.*] Oh, my lord has promised the company a new song; we'll get 'em to give it us by the way.—Pray let us have the favour of you, to practise the song before the company hear it.

SONG.

Cynthia frowns whene'er I woo her,
Yet she's vex'd if I give over;
Much she fears I should undo her,
But much more to lose her lover:
Thus in doubting she refuses;
And not winning, thus she loses.

Prithee, Cynthia, look behind you,
Age and wrinkles will o'ertake you;
Then, too late, desire will find you,
When the power must forsake you:
Think, O think, o' th' sad condition,
To be past, yet wish fruition!

Mel. You shall have my thanks below.
[*To the* Musicians, *who go out.*

SCENE IV.

MELLEFONT, CYNTHIA, Sir PAUL PLYANT, *and* Lady PLYANT.

Sir Paul. [*Aside to* Lady PLYANT.] Gadsbud! I am provoked into a fermentation, as my Lady Froth says; was ever the like read of in story?

Lady Ply. [*Aside to* Sir PAUL.] Sir Paul, have patience; let me alone to rattle him up.

Sir Paul. Pray your ladyship, give me leave to be angry.—I'll rattle him up, I warrant you, I'll firk him with a certiorari!

Lady Ply. You firk him! I'll firk him myself; pray, sir Paul, hold you contented.

Cyn. [*Aside to* MELLEFONT.] Bless me, what makes my father in such a passion! I never saw him thus before.

Sir Paul. Hold yourself contented, my lady Plyant: I find passion coming upon me by inflation, and I cannot submit as formerly, therefore give way.

Lady Ply. How now! will you be pleased to retire, and—

Sir Paul. No, marry, will I not be pleased! I am pleased to be angry, that's my pleasure at this time.

Mel. What can this mean? [*Aside to* CYNTHIA.

Lady Ply. Gad's my life, the man's distracted! Why, how now! who are you? what am I? Slidikins, can't I govern you? what did I marry you for? Am I not to be absolute and uncontrollable? Is it fit a woman of my spirit and conduct should be contradicted in a matter of this concern?

Sir Paul. It concerns me, and only me;—besides, I'm not to be governed at all times. When I am in tranquillity, my lady Plyant shall command sir Paul; but when I am provoked to fury, I cannot incorporate with patience and reason: — as soon may tigers match with tigers, lambs with lambs, and every creature couple with its foe, as the poet says.

Lady Ply. He's hot-headed still!—'Tis in vain to talk to you; but remember I have a curtain lecture for you, you disobedient, headstrong brute!

Sir Paul. No; 'tis because I won't be headstrong, because I won't be a brute, and have my head fortified, that I am thus exasperated. But I will protect my honour, and yonder is the violator of my fame.

Lady Ply. 'Tis my honour that is concerned; and the violation was intended to me. Your honour! you have none but what is in my keeping, and I can dispose of it when I please;—therefore don't provoke me.

Sir Paul. [*Aside.*] Hum, gadsbud, she says true!—[*Aloud.*] Well, my lady, march on, I will fight under you, then; I am convinced, as far as passion will permit.

[Lady PLYANT *and* Sir PAUL *come up to* MELLEFONT.

Lady Ply. Inhuman and treacherous—

Sir Paul. Thou serpent and first tempter of womankind!

Cyn. Bless me, sir!—madam, what mean you?

Sir Paul. Thy, Thy, come away Thy! touch him not. Come hither, girl, go not near him, there's nothing but deceit about him; snakes are in his peruke, and the crocodile of Nilus in his belly; he will eat thee up alive.

Lady Ply. Dishonourable, impudent creature!

Mel. For Heaven's sake, madam, to whom do you direct this language!

Lady Ply. Have I behaved myself with all the decorum and nicety befitting the person of Sir Paul's wife? have I preserved my honour as it were in a snow-house for these three years past? have I been white and unsullied even by Sir Paul himself?

Sir Paul. Nay, she has been an invincible wife, even to me; that's the truth on't.

Lady Ply. Have I, I say, preserved myself like a fair sheet of paper, for you to make a blot upon?

Sir Paul. And she shall make a simile with any woman in England.

Mel. I am so amazed, I know not what to say.

Sir Paul. Do you think, my daughter, this pretty creature — gadsbud; she's a wife for a cherubim!—do you think her fit for nothing but to be a stalking-horse to stand before you, while you take aim at my wife? Gadsbud, I was never angry before in my life, and I'll never be appeased again!

Mel. [*Aside.*] Hell and damnation! this is my aunt; such malice can be engendered nowhere else.

Lady Ply. Sir Paul, take Cynthia from his sight; leave me to strike him with the remorse of his intended crime.

Cyn. Pray, sir, stay, hear him; I dare affirm he's innocent.

Sir Paul. Innocent! why hark'ye, come hither Thy, hark'ye, I had it from his aunt, my sister Touchwood.—Gadsbud, he does not care a farthing for anything of thee but thy portion: why, he's in love with my wife; he would have tantalised thee, and made a cuckold of thy poor father; and that would certainly have broken my heart.—I'm sure if ever I should have horns, they would kill me; they would never come kindly, I should die of 'em, like a child that was cutting his teeth; I should indeed, Thy;—therefore come away; but Providence has prevented all, therefore come away when I bid you.

Cyn. I must obey.

SCENE V.

Lady Plyant *and* Mellefont.

Lady Ply. O, such a thing! the impiety of it startles me! To wrong so good, so fair a creature, and one that loves you tenderly; 'tis a barbarity of barbarities, and nothing could be guilty of it—

Mel. But the greatest villain imagination can form. I grant it; and next to the villany of such a fact is the villany of aspersing me with the guilt. How? which way was I to wrong her? for yet I understand you not.

Lady Ply. Why, gads my life, cousin Mellefont, you cannot be so peremptory as to deny it, when I tax you with it to your face! for, now sir Paul's gone, you are *corum nobus*.

Mel. By Heaven, I love her more than life, or—

Lady Ply. Fiddle, faddle, don't tell me of this and that, and everything in the world, but give me mathemacular demonstration, answer me directly.—But I have not patience—Oh, the impiety of it! as I was saying, and the unparalleled wickedness! O merciful Father! how could you think to reverse nature so,—to make the daughter the means of procuring the mother?

Mel. The daughter to procure the mother!

Lady Ply. Ay, for though I am not Cynthia's own mother, I am her father's wife, and that's near enough to make it incest.

Mel. [*Aside.*] Incest! O my precious aunt, and the devil in conjunction!

Lady Ply. O reflect upon the horror of that, and then the guilt of deceiving everybody; marrying the daughter, only to make a cuckold of the father; and then seducing me, debauching my purity, and perverting me from the road of virtue, in which I have trod thus long, and never made one trip, not one *faux pas;* O consider it, what would you have to answer for, if you should provoke me to frailty? Alas! humanity is feeble, Heaven knows! very feeble, and unable to support itself.

Mel. Where am I? is it day? and am I awake? —Madam—

Lady Ply. And nobody knows how circumstances may happen together.—To my thinking, now, I could resist the strongest temptation.—But yet I know, 'tis impossible for me to know whether I could or not; there's no certainty in the things of this life.

Mel. Madam, pray give me leave to ask you one question.

Lady Ply. O Lord, ask me the question! I'll swear I'll refuse it! I swear I'll deny it!—therefore don't ask me:—nay, you shan't ask me; I swear I'll deny it. O gemini, you have brought all the blood into my face! I warrant I am as red as a turkey-cock; O fy, cousin Mellefont!

Mel. Nay, madam, hear me; I mean—

Lady Ply. Hear you! no, no; I'll deny you first, and hear you afterward. For one does not know how one's mind may change upon hearing. —Hearing is one of the senses, and all the senses are fallible; I won't trust my honour, I assure you; my honour is infallible and uncome-at-able.

Mel. For Heaven's sake, madam—

Lady Ply. O name it no more!—Bless me, how can you talk of heaven! and have so much wickedness in your heart? Maybe you don't think it a sin.—They say some of you gentlemen don't think it a sin.—Maybe it is no sin to them that don't think it so; indeed, if I did not think it a sin—but still my honour, if it were no sin.—But then, to marry my daughter, for the conveniency of frequent opportunities, I'll never consent to that; as sure as can be, I'll break the match.

Mel. Death and amazement!—Madam, upon my knees—

Lady Ply. Nay, nay, rise up; come, you shall see my good-nature. I know love is powerful, and nobody can help his passion: 'tis not your fault, nor I swear it is not mine.—How can I help it, if I have charms? and how can you help it if you are made a captive? I swear it is pity it should be a fault.—But my honour,—well, but your honour too—but the sin!—well, but the necessity—O Lord, here's somebody coming, I dare not stay. Well, you must consider of your crime; and strive as much as can be against it,—strive, be sure—but don't be melancholic, don't despair.—But never think that I'll grant you anything; O Lord, no. —But be sure you lay aside all thoughts of the marriage: for though I know you don't love Cynthia, only as a blind to your passion for me, yet it will make me jealous.—O Lord, what did I say? jealous! no, no, I can't be jealous, for I must not love you—therefore don't hope,—but don't despair neither.—O, they're coming! I must fly.

SCENE VI.

Mellefont, *after a pause.*

So then, spite of my care and foresight, I am caught, caught in my security.—Yet this was but a shallow artifice, unworthy of my Machiavelian aunt: there must be more behind, this is but the first flash, the priming of her engine; destruction follows hard, if not most presently prevented.

SCENE VII.

MELLEFONT *and* MASKWELL.

Mel. Maskwell, welcome! thy presence is a view of land, appearing to my shipwrecked hopes; the witch has raised the storm, and her ministers have done their work; you see the vessels are parted.

Mask. I know it; I met sir Paul towing away Cynthia. Come, trouble not your head, I'll join you together ere to-morrow morning, or drown between you in the attempt.

Mel. There's comfort in a hand stretched out, to one that's sinking, though ne'er so far off.

Mask. No sinking, nor no danger. Come, cheer up; why, you don't know, that while I plead for you, your aunt has given me a retaining fee?—Nay, I am your greatest enemy, and she does but journey-work under me.

Mel. Ha! how's this?

Mask. What d'ye think of my being employed in the execution of all her plots? Ha! ha! ha! by heaven it's true! I have undertaken to break the match, I have undertaken to make your uncle disinherit you, to get you turned out of doors; and to—ha! ha! ha! I can't tell you for laughing.—Oh she has opened her heart to me,—I am to turn you a grazing, and to—ha! ha! ha! marry Cynthia myself; there's a plot for you!

Mel. Ha! Oh I see, I see, my rising sun! light breaks through clouds upon me, and I shall live in day!—O my Maskwell! how shall I thank or praise thee? thou hast outwitted woman.—But tell me, how couldst thou thus get into her confidence? ha! how?—But was it her contrivance to persuade my lady Plyant to this extravagant belief?

Mask. It was; and, to tell you the truth, I encouraged it for your diversion: though it made you a little uneasy for the present, yet the reflection of it must needs be entertaining.—I warrant she was very violent at first.

Mel. Ha! ha! ha! ay, a very fury; but I was most afraid of her violence at last.—If you had not come as you did, I don't know what she might have attempted.

Mask. Ha! ha! ha! I know her temper.—Well, you must know, then, that all my contrivances were but bubbles; till at last I pretended to have been long secretly in love with Cynthia; that did my business; that convinced your aunt I might be trusted, since it was as much my interest as hers to break the match: then, she thought my jealousy might qualify me to assist her in her revenge; and, in short, in that belief, told me the secrets of her heart. At length we made this agreement, if I accomplish her designs (as I told you before) she has engaged to put Cynthia with all her fortune into my power.

Mel. She is most gracious in her favour!—Well, and dear Jack, how hast thou contrived?

Mask. I would not have you stay to hear it now; for I don't know but she may come this way; I am to meet her anon; after that, I'll tell you the whole matter; be here in this gallery an hour hence, by that time I imagine our consultation may be over.

Mel. I will; till then success attend thee.

SCENE VIII.

MASKWELL.

Till then, success will attend me; for when I meet you, I meet the only obstacle to my fortune.—Cynthia, let thy beauty gild my crimes; and whatsoever I commit of treachery or deceit, shall be imputed to me as a merit.—Treachery! what treachery? love cancels all the bonds of friendship, and sets men right upon their first foundations.—Duty to kings, piety to parents, gratitude to benefactors, and fidelity to friends, are different and particular ties: but the name of rival cuts 'em all asunder, and is a general acquittance. Rival is equal, and love like death, a universal leveller of mankind. Ha! but is there not such a thing as honesty? Yes, and whosoever has it about him bears an enemy in his breast: for your honest man, as I take it, is that nice scrupulous conscientious person, who will cheat nobody but himself; such another coxcomb as your wise man, who is too hard for all the world, and will be made a fool of by nobody but himself: ha! ha! ha! Well, for wisdom and honesty, give me cunning and hypocrisy; oh, 'tis such a pleasure to angle for fair-faced fools! Then that hungry gudgeon credulity will bite at anything.—Why, let me see, I have the same face, the same words and accents, when I speak what I do think, and when I speak what I do not think—the very same—and dear dissimulation is the only art not to be known from nature.

Why will mankind be fools, and be deceived?
And why are friends and lovers' oaths believed?
When each, who searches strictly his own mind,
May so much fraud and power of baseness find.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Gallery in* Lord TOUCHWOOD'S *House.*

Lord TOUCHWOOD *and* Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Lady Touch. My lord, can you blame my brother Plyant, if he refuse his daughter upon this provocation? the contract's void by this unheard-of impiety.

Lord Touch. I don't believe it true; he has better principles—Pho, 'tis nonsense! Come, come, I know my lady Plyant has a large eye, and would centre everything in her own circle. 'Tis not the first time she has mistaken respect for love, and made Sir Paul jealous of the civility of an undesigning person, the better to bespeak his security in her unfeigned pleasures.

Lady Touch. You censure hardly, my lord; my sister's honour is very well known.

Lord Touch. Yes, I believe I know some that have been familiarly acquainted with it. This is a little trick wrought by some pitiful contriver, envious of my nephew's merit.

Lady Touch. Nay, my lord, it may be so, and I hope it will be found so: but that will require some time; for in such a case as this, demonstration is necessary.

Lord Touch. There should have been demonstration of the contrary too, before it had been believed.

Lady Touch. So I suppose there was.

Lord Touch. How? where? when?

Lady Touch. That I can't tell; nay, I don't say there was. I am willing to believe as favourably of my nephew as I can.

Lord Touch. I don't know that. [*Half aside.*

Lady Touch. How? don't you believe that, say you, my lord?

Lord Touch. No, I don't say so.—I confess I am troubled to find you so cold in his defence.

Lady Touch. His defence! bless me, would you have me defend an ill thing?

Lord Touch. You believe it then?

Lady Touch. I don't know; I am very unwilling to speak my thoughts in anything that may be to my cousin's disadvantage; besides, I find, my lord, you are prepared to receive an ill impression from any opinion of mine which is not consenting with your own; but since I am like to be suspected in the end, and 'tis a pain any longer to dissemble, I own it to you; in short, I do believe it, nay, and can believe anything worse, if it were laid to his charge.—Don't ask me my reasons, my lord; for they are not fit to be told you.

Lord Touch. [*Aside.*] I'm amazed, here must be something more than ordinary in this.—[*Aloud.*] Not fit to be told me, madam? you can have no interests wherein I am not concerned, and consequently the same reasons ought to be convincing to me which create your satisfaction or disquiet.

Lady Touch. But those which cause my disquiet, I am willing to have remote from your hearing. Good my lord, don't press me.

Lord Touch. Don't oblige me to press you.

Lady Touch. Whatever it was, 'tis past; and that is better to be unknown which cannot be prevented; therefore let me beg you to rest satisfied.

Lord Touch. When you have told me, I will.

Lady Touch. You won't.

Lord Touch. By my life, my dear, I will.

Lady Touch. What if you can't?

Lord Touch. How? then I must know, nay I will: no more trifling.—I charge you tell me!—by all our mutual peace to come! upon your duty!—

Lady Touch. Nay, my lord, you need say no more, to make me lay my heart before you: but don't be thus transported; compose yourself; it is not of concern, to make you lose one minute's temper. 'Tis not indeed, my dear. Nay, by this kiss, you shan't be angry. O Lord, I wish I had not told you anything!—Indeed, my lord, you have frighted me. Nay, look pleased, I'll tell you.

Lord Touch. Well, well.

Lady Touch. Nay, but will you be calm?—indeed it's nothing but—

Lord Touch. But what?

Lady Touch. But will you promise me not to be angry?—nay, you must,—not to be angry with Mellefont?—I dare swear he's sorry; and were it to do again, would not—

Lord Touch. Sorry, for what? death, you rack me with delay!

Lady Touch. Nay, no great matter, only—well, I have your promise—pho, why nothing, only your nephew had a mind to amuse himself sometimes with a little gallantry towards me. Nay, I can't think he meant anything seriously, but methought it looked oddly.

Lord Touch. Confusion and hell, what do I hear!

Lady Touch. Or, maybe, he thought he was not enough akin to me, upon your account, and had a mind to create a nearer relation on his own; a lover, you know, my lord—ha! ha! ha! Well, but that's all—Now, you have it; well, remember your promise, my lord, and don't take any notice of it to him.

Lord Touch. No, no, no—damnation!

Lady Touch. Nay, I swear you must not!—A little harmless mirth—only misplaced, that's all; but if it were more, 'tis over now, and all's well. For my part, I have forgot it; and so has he, I hope; for I have not heard anything from him these two days.

Lord Touch. These two days! is it so fresh? Unnatural villain! Death, I'll have him stripped and turned naked out of my doors this moment, and let him rot and perish, incestuous brute!

Lady Touch. O for Heaven's sake, my lord! you'll ruin me if you take such public notice of it, it will be a town-talk: consider your own and my honour—nay, I told you, you would not be satisfied when you knew it.

Lord Touch. Before I've done I will be satisfied. Ungrateful monster, how long—

Lady Touch. Lord, I don't know! I wish my lips had grown together when I told you.—Almost a twelvemonth.—Nay, I won't tell you any more, till you are yourself. Pray, my lord, don't let the company see you in this disorder.—Yet, I confess I can't blame you; for I think I was never so surprised in my life.—Who would have thought my nephew could have so misconstrued my kindness? But will you go into your closet, and recover your temper? I'll make an excuse of sudden business to the company, and come to you. Pray, good dear my lord, let me beg you do now: I'll come immediately, and tell you all; will you, my lord?

Lord Touch. I will—I am mute with wonder.

Lady Touch. Well, but go now, here's somebody coming.

Lord Touch. Well, I go.—You won't stay? for I would hear more of this.

Lady Touch. I follow instantly.—So.

SCENE II.

Lady Touchwood *and* Maskwell.

Mask. This was a masterpiece, and did not need my help;—though I stood ready for a cue to come in and confirm all, had there been occasion.

Lady Touch. Have you seen Mellefont?

Mask. I have; and am to meet him here about this time.

Lady Touch. How does he bear his disappointment?

Mask. Secure in my assistance, he seemed not much afflicted, but rather laughed at the shallow artifice, which so little time must of necessity discover. Yet he is apprehensive of some farther

design of yours, and has engaged me to watch you. I believe he will hardly be able to prevent your plot, yet I would have you use caution and expedition.

Lady Touch. Expedition indeed; for all we do, must be performed in the remaining part of this evening, and before the company break up; lest my lord should cool, and have an opportunity to talk with him privately.—My lord must not see him again.

Mask. By no means; therefore you must aggravate my lord's displeasure to a degree that will admit of no conference with him.—What think you of mentioning me?

Lady Touch. How?

Mask. To my lord, as having been privy to Mellefont's design upon you, but still using my utmost endeavours to dissuade him, though my friendship and love to him has made me conceal it; yet you may say, I threatened the next time he attempted anything of that kind, to discover it to my lord.

Lady Touch. To what end is this?

Mask. It will confirm my lord's opinion of my honour and honesty, and create in him a new confidence in me, which (should this design miscarry) will be necessary to the forming another plot that I have in my head.—[*Aside.*] To cheat you as well as the rest.

Lady Touch. I'll do it—I'll tell him you hindered him once from forcing me.

Mask. Excellent! your ladyship has a most improving fancy. You had best go to my lord, keep him as long as you can in his closet, and I doubt not but you will mould him to what you please; your guests are so engaged in their own follies and intrigues, they'll miss neither of you.

Lady Touch. When shall we meet?—At eight this evening in my chamber; there rejoice at our success, and toy away an hour in mirth.

Mask. I will not fail.

SCENE III.

MASKWELL.

I know what she means by toying away an hour well enough. Pox! I have lost all appetite to her; yet she's a fine woman, and I loved her once. But I don't know, since I have been in a great measure kept by her, the case is altered; what was my pleasure is become my duty: and I have as little stomach to her now as if I were her husband. Should she smoke my design upon Cynthia, I were in a fine pickle. She has a damned penetrating head, and knows how to interpret a coldness the right way; therefore I must dissemble ardour and ecstacy, that's resolved: how easily and pleasantly is that dissembled before fruition! Pox on't! that a man can't drink without quenching his thirst. Ha! yonder comes Mellefont thoughtful.—Let me think: meet her at eight—hum—ha—by heaven, I have it—if I can speak to my lord before.—Was it my brain or Providence? No matter which.—I will deceive 'em all, and yet secure myself: 'twas a lucky thought! Well, this double-dealing is a jewel. Here he comes, now for me.

[MASKWELL *pretending not to see him, walks by him, and speaks, as it were, to himself.*

SCENE IV.

MASKWELL *and* MELLEFONT.

Mask. Mercy on us! what will the wickedness of this world come to?

Mel. How now, Jack? what, so full of contemplation that you run over!

Mask. I'm glad you're come, for I could not contain myself any longer; and was just going to give vent to a secret, which nobody but you ought to drink down.—Your aunt's just gone from hence.

Mel. And having trusted thee with the secrets of her soul, thou art villanously bent to discover 'em all to me, ha!

Mask. I'm afraid my frailty leans that way.—But I don't know whether I can in honour discover 'em all.

Mel. All, all, man; what! you may in honour betray her as far as she betrays herself. No tragical design upon my person, I hope?

Mask. No, but it's a comical design upon mine.

Mel. What dost thou mean?

Mask. Listen and be dumb, we have been bargaining about the rate of your ruin.

Mel. Like any two guardians to an orphan heiress.—Well.

Mask. And, whereas pleasure is generally paid with mischief, what mischief I do is to be paid with pleasure.

Mel. So when you've swallowed the potion, you sweeten your mouth with a plum.

Mask. You are merry, sir, but I shall probe your constitution. In short, the price of your banishment is to be paid with the person of—

Mel. Of Cynthia, and her fortune.—Why, you forget you told me this before.

Mask. No, no.—So far you are right; and I am, as an earnest of that bargain, to have full and free possession of the person of your—aunt.

Mel. Ha!—Pho, you trifle!

Mask. By this light, I'm serious; all raillery apart—I knew 'twould stun you: this evening at eight she will receive me in her bedchamber.

Mel. Hell and the devil! is she abandoned of all grace?—why, the woman is possessed!

Mask. Well, will you go in my stead?

Mel. By Heaven into a hot furnace sooner!

Mask. No, you would not.—It would not be so convenient as I can order matters.

Mel. What d'ye mean?

Mask. Mean! not to disappoint the lady, I assure you.—[*Aside.*] Ha! ha! ha! how gravely he looks!—[*Aloud.*] Come, come, I won't perplex you. 'Tis the only thing that Providence could have contrived to make me capable of serving you, either to my inclination or your own necessity.

Mel. How, how, for Heaven's sake, dear Maskwell?

Mask. Why thus: I'll go according to appointment; you shall have notice at the critical minute to come and surprise your aunt and me together; counterfeit a rage against me, and I'll make my escape through the private passage from her chamber, which I'll take care to leave open: 'twill be hard if then you can't bring her to any conditions. For this discovery will disarm her of all defence, and leave her entirely at your mercy: nay, she must ever after be in awe of you.

Mel. Let me adore thee, my better genius! by Heaven I think it is not in the power of fate to disappoint my hopes!—My hopes! my certainty!

Mask. Well, I'll meet you here within a quarter of eight, and give you notice.

Mel. Good fortune ever go along with thee!

SCENE V.

MELLEFONT *and* CARELESS.

Care. Mellefont, get out o' th' way, my lady Plyant's coming, and I shall never succeed while thou art in sight,—though she begins to tack about; but I made love a great while to no purpose.

Mel. Why, what's the matter? she's convinced that I don't care for her.

Care. I can't get an answer from her that does not begin with her honour, or her virtue, her religion, or some such cant. Then she has told me the whole history of sir Paul's nine years' courtship; how he has lain for whole nights together upon the stairs before her chamber door; and that the first favour he received from her was a piece of an old scarlet petticoat for a stomacher, which since the day of his marriage he has, out of a piece of gallantry, converted into a nightcap, and wears it still with much solemnity on his anniversary wedding-night.

Mel. That I have seen, with the ceremony thereunto belonging: for on that night he creeps in at the bed's feet, like a gulled bassa that has married a relation of the Grand Signior, and that night he has his arms at liberty. Did not she tell you at what a distance she keeps him? He has confessed to me that but at some certain times, that is, I suppose, when she apprehends being with child, he never has the privilege of using the familiarity of a husband with a wife. He was once given to scrambling with his hands and sprawling in his sleep; and ever since she has him swaddled up in blankets, and his hands and feet swathed down, and so put to bed; and there he lies with a great beard, like a Russian bear upon a drift of snow. You are very great with him, I wonder he never told you his grievances: he will, I warrant you.

Care. Excessively foolish!—But that which gives me most hopes of her is her telling me of the many temptations she has resisted.

Mel. Nay, then you have her; for a woman's bragging to a man that she has overcome temptations, is an argument that they were weakly offered, and a challenge to him to engage her more irresistibly. 'Tis only an enhancing the price of the commodity by telling you how many customers have underbid her.

Care. Nay, I don't despair: but still she has a grudging to you. I talked to her t'other night at my lord Froth's masquerade, when I'm satisfied she knew me, and I had no reason to complain of my reception; but I find women are not the same barefaced and in masks; and a vizor disguises their inclinations as much as their faces.

Mel. 'Tis a mistake, for women may most properly be said to be unmasked when they wear vizors; for that secures them from blushing, and being out of countenance; and next to being in the dark, or alone, they are most truly themselves in a vizor-mask.—Here they come, I'll leave you.—Ply her close, and by-and-by clap a billet-doux into her hand; for a woman never thinks a man truly in love with her till he has been fool enough to think of her out of her sight, and to lose so much time as to write to her.

SCENE VI.

CARELESS, Sir PAUL *and* Lady PLYANT.

Sir Paul. Shan't we disturb your meditation, Mr. Careless? you would be private?

Care. You bring that along with you, sir Paul, that shall be always welcome to my privacy.

Sir Paul. O sweet sir, you load your humble servants, both me and my wife, with continual favours.

Lady Ply. Sir Paul, what a phrase was there! You will be making answers, and taking that upon you which ought to lie upon me!—That you should have so little breeding to think Mr. Careless did not apply himself to me! Pray what have you to entertain anybody's privacy? I swear, and declare in the face of the world, I'm ready to blush for your ignorance!

Sir Paul. [*Aside to* Lady PLYANT.] I acquiesce, my lady; but don't snub so loud.

Lady Ply. Mr. Careless, if a person that is wholly illiterate might be supposed to be capable of being qualified to make a suitable return to those obligations which you are pleased to confer upon one that is wholly incapable of being qualified in all those circumstances, I'm sure I should rather attempt it than anything in the world; [*Curtsies.*] for I'm sure there's nothing in the world that I would rather. [*Curtsies.*] But I know Mr. Careless is so great a critic and so fine a gentleman, that it is impossible for me—

Care. O heavens, madam, you confound me!

Sir Paul. Gadsbud, she's a fine person.

Lady Ply. O Lord, sir, pardon me, we women have not those advantages. I know my own imperfections.—But at the same time you must give me leave to declare in the face of the world, that nobody is more sensible of favours and things; for, with the reserve of my honour, I assure you, Mr. Careless, I don't know anything in the world I would refuse to a person so meritorious.—You'll pardon my want of expression.

Care. O, your ladyship is abounding in all excellence, particularly that of phrase.

Lady Ply. You are so obliging, sir.

Care. Your ladyship is so charming.

Sir Paul. So, now, now; now, my lady.

Lady Ply. So well bred.

Care. So surprising.

Lady Ply. So well dressed, so *bonne mine*, so eloquent, so unaffected, so easy, so free, so particular, so agreeable—

Sir Paul. Ay, so, so, there.

Care. O Lord, I beseech you, madam! don't—

Lady Ply. So gay, so graceful, so good teeth, so fine shape, so fine limbs, so fine linen, and I don't doubt but you have a very good skin, sir.

Care. For Heaven's sake, madam!—I'm quite out of countenance.

Sir Paul. And my lady's quite out of breath: or else you should hear—Gadsbud, you may talk of my lady Froth!

Care. O, fy! fy! not to be named of a day.—My lady Froth is very well in her accomplishments;—but it is when my lady Plyant is not thought of;—if that can ever be.

Lady Ply. O you overcome me!—that is so excessive.

Sir Paul. Nay, I swear and vow, that was pretty.

Care. O, sir Paul, you are the happiest man alive! Such a lady! that is the envy of her own sex, and the admiration of ours.

Sir Paul. Your humble servant. I am, I thank heaven, in a fine way of living, as I may say, peacefully and happily, and I think need not envy any of my neighbours, blessed be Providence!—Ay, truly, Mr. Careless, my lady is a great blessing, a fine, discreet, well-spoken woman as you shall see, if it becomes me to say so, and we live very comfortably together; she is a little hasty sometimes, and so am I; but mine's soon over, and then I'm so sorry.—O Mr. Careless, if it were not for one thing—

SCENE VII.

CARELESS, SIR PAUL, LADY PLYANT, *and* BOY *with a letter.*

Lady Ply. How often have you been told of that, you jackanapes!

Sir Paul. Gad so, gadsbud!—Tim, carry it to my lady; you should have carried it to my lady first.

Boy. 'Tis directed to your worship.

Sir Paul. Well, well, my lady reads all letters first.—Child, do so no more; d'ye hear, Tim?

Boy. No, and't please you.

SCENE VIII.

CARELESS, SIR PAUL *and* LADY PLYANT.

Sir Paul. A humour of my wife's; you know women have little fancies.—But, as I was telling you, Mr. Careless, if it were not for one thing, I should think myself the happiest man in the world; indeed that touches me near, very near.

Care. What can that be, sir Paul?

Sir Paul. Why, I have, I thank heaven, a very plentiful fortune, a good estate in the country, some houses in town, and some money, a pretty tolerable personal estate; and it is a great grief to me, indeed it is, Mr. Careless, that I have not a son to inherit this.—'Tis true, I have a daughter, and a fine dutiful child she is, though I say it, blessed be Providence! I may say; for indeed, Mr. Careless, I am mightily beholden to Providence:—a poor unworthy sinner.—But if I had a son,—ah, that's my affliction, and my only affliction! indeed I cannot refrain tears when it comes in my mind. [*Cries.*

Care. Why, methinks, that might be easily remedied:—my lady is a fine, likely woman.

Sir Paul. Oh, a fine, likely woman as you shall see in a summer's day! indeed she is, Mr. Careless, in all respects.

Care. And I should not have taken you to have been so old—

Sir Paul. Alas! that's not it, Mr. Careless; ah! that's not it; no, no, you shoot wide of the mark a mile; indeed you do; that's not it, Mr. Careless; no, no, that's not it.

Care. No! what can be the matter then?

Sir Paul. You'll scarcely believe me, when I shall tell you. My lady is so nice—it's very strange, but it's true—too true—she's so very nice, that I don't believe she would touch a man for the world;—at least not above once a year. I'm sure I have found it so; and, alas! what's once a year to an old man, who would do good in his generation? Indeed it's true, Mr. Careless, it breaks my heart.—I am her husband, as I may say; though far unworthy of that honour, yet I am her husband; but, alas-a-day! I have no more familiarity with her person, as to that matter, than with my own mother;—no indeed.

Care. Alas-a-day, this is a lamentable story! my lady must be told on't; she must i'faith, sir Paul; 'tis an injury to the world.

Sir Paul. Ay, would to heaven you would, Mr. Careless! you are mightily in her favour.

Care. I warrant you.—What, we must have a son some way or other!

Sir Paul. Indeed, I should be mightily bound to you, if you could bring it about, Mr. Careless.

Lady Ply. Here, sir Paul, it's from your steward; here's a return of six hundred pounds; you may take fifty of it for the next half year. [*Gives him the letter.*

SCENE IX.

CARELESS, SIR PAUL, LADY PLYANT, LORD FROTH, *and* CYNTHIA.

Sir Paul. How does my girl? come hither to thy father, poor lamb, thou'rt melancholic.

Lord Froth. Heaven, sir Paul, you amaze me of all things in the world!—You are never pleased but when we are all upon the broad grin; all laugh and no company; ah, then 'tis such a sight to see some teeth!—Sure, you're a great admirer of my lady Whifler, Mr. Sneer, and sir Laurence Loud, and that gang.

Sir Paul. I vow and swear she's a very merry woman, but I think she laughs a little too much.

Lord Froth. Merry! O Lord, what a character that is of a woman of quality!—You have been at my lady Whifler's upon her day, madam?

Cyn. Yes, my lord.—[*Aside.*] I must humour this fool.

Lord Froth. Well, and how? hee! what is your sense of the conversation?

Cyn. O, most ridiculous! a perpetual consort of laughing without any harmony; for sure, my lord, to laugh out of time is as disagreeable as to sing out of time or out of tune.

Lord Froth. Hee! hee! hee! right. And then, my lady Whifler is so ready;—she always comes in three bars too soon.—And then, what do they laugh at? for you know laughing without a jest is as impertinent; hee! as, as—

Cyn. As dancing without a fiddle.

Lord Froth. Just, i'faith! that was at my tongue's end.

Cyn. But that cannot be properly said of them, for I think they are all in good-nature with the world, and only laugh at one another; and you must allow they have all jests in their persons, though they have none in their conversation.

Lord Froth. True, as I'm a person of honour.—For heaven's sake let us sacrifice 'em to mirth a little.

Enter Boy, *and whispers* Sir Paul.

Sir Paul. Gads so—Wife! wife! my lady Plyant! I have a word.

Lady Ply. I'm busy, sir Paul, I wonder at your impertinence!

Care. [*Aside to* Sir Paul.] Sir Paul, hark ye, I'm reasoning the matter you know.—[*Aloud.*] Madam, if your ladyship please, we'll discourse of this in the next room.

Sir Paul. O ho! I wish you good success, I wish you good success.—Boy, tell my lady, when she has done I would speak with her below.

SCENE X.

Cynthia, Lord Froth, Lady Froth, *and* Brisk.

Lady Froth. Then you think that episode between Susan, the dairy-maid, and our coachman, is not amiss; you know I may suppose the dairy in town as well as in the country.

Brisk. Incomparable, let me perish!—But then being an heroic poem, had not you better call him a charioteer? charioteer sounds great; besides, your ladyship's coachman having a red face, and you comparing him to the sun; and you know the sun is called heaven's charioteer.

Lady Froth. Oh, infinitely better! I am extremely beholden to you for the hint; stay, we'll read over those half a score lines again. [*Pulls out a paper.*] Let me see here, you know what goes before,—the comparison, you know. [*Reads.*

For as the sun shines every day,
So, of our coachman I may say—

Brisk. I'm afraid that simile won't do in wet weather;—because you say the sun shines every day.

Lady Froth. No, for the sun it won't, but it will do for the coachman; for you know there's most occasion for a coach in wet weather.

Brisk. Right, right, that saves all.

Lady Froth. Then, I don't say the sun shines all the day, but that he peeps now and then; yet he does shine all the day too, you know, though we don't see him.

Brisk. Right, but the vulgar will never comprehend that.

Lady Froth. Well, you shall hear.—Let me see. [*Reads.*

For as the sun shines every day,
So, of our coachman I may say,
He shows his drunken fiery face,
Just as the sun does, more or less.

Brisk. That's right, all's well, all's well!—*More or less.*

Lady Froth. [Reads.] *And when at night his labour's done,*
Then too, like heaven's charioteer the sun—

Ay, *charioteer* does better..

Into the dairy he descends,
And there his whipping and his driving ends;
There he's secure from danger of a bilk,
His fare is paid him, and he sets in milk.

For Susan, you know, is Thetis, and so—

Brisk. Incomparably well and proper, egad!—But I have one exception to make:—don't you think *bilk* (I know it's good rhyme), but don't you think *bilk* and *fare* too like a hackney-coachman?

Lady Froth. I swear and vow, I am afraid so.—And yet our Jehu was a hackney-coachman when my lord took him.

Brisk. Was he? I'm answered, if Jehu was a hackney-coachman.—You may put that in the marginal notes though, to prevent criticism.—Only mark it with a small asterism, and say, *Jehu was formerly a hackney-coachman.*

Lady Froth. I will; you'd oblige me extremely to write notes to the whole poem.

Brisk. With all my heart and soul, and proud of the vast honour, let me perish!

Lord Froth. Hee! hee! hee! my dear, have you done?—won't you join with us? we were laughing at my lady Whifler and Mr. Sneer.

Lady Froth. Ay, my dear.—Were you? O filthy Mr. Sneer! he's a nauseous figure, a most fulsamic fop, foh!—He spent two days together in going about Covent-Garden, to suit the lining of his coach with his complexion.

Lord Froth. O silly! yet his aunt is as fond of him, as if she had brought the ape into the world herself.

Brisk. Who, my lady Toothless! O, she's a mortifying spectacle; she's always chewing the cud like an old ewe.

Cyn. Fy, Mr. Brisk! eringos for her cough.

Lady Froth. I have seen her take 'em half chewed out of her mouth, to laugh, and then put them in again—foh!

Lord Froth. Foh!

Lady Froth. Then she's always ready to laugh when Sneer offers to speak, and sits in expectation of his no jest, with her gums bare, and her mouth open—

Brisk. Like an oyster at low ebb, egad—Ha! ha! ha!

Cyn. [*Aside.*] Well, I find there are no fools so inconsiderable in themselves, but they can render other people contemptible by exposing their infirmities.

Lady Froth. Then that t'other great strapping lady—I can't hit of her name—the old fat fool that paints so exorbitantly.

Brisk. I know whom you mean—but, deuse take me! I can't hit of her name neither.—Paints, d'ye say? why she lays it on with a trowel.—Then she has a great beard that bristles through it, and makes her look as if she were plastered with lime and hair, let me perish!

Lady Froth. Oh, you made a song upon her, Mr. Brisk.

Brisk. He! egad, so I did:—my lord can sing it.

Cyn. O, good my lord, let's hear it.

Brisk. 'Tis not a song neither;—it's a sort of an epigram, or rather an epigrammatic sonnet; I don't know what to call it, but it's satire.—Sing it, my lord.

Lord Froth *sings.*

Ancient Phillis has young graces,
'Tis a strange thing, but a true one;
Shall I tell you how?
She herself makes her own faces,
And each morning wears a new one;
Where's the wonder now?

Brisk. Short, but there's salt in't; my way of writing, egad!

SCENE XI.

CYNTHIA, LORD FROTH, LADY FROTH, BRISK, *and* FOOTMAN.

Lady Froth. How now?

Foot. Your ladyship's chair is come.

Lady Froth. Is nurse and the child in it?

Foot. Yes, madam.

Lady Froth. O the dear creature! let's go see it.

Lord Froth. I swear, my dear, you'll spoil that child, with sending it to and again so often: this is the seventh time the chair has gone for her to-day.

Lady Froth. O la! I swear it's but the sixth—and I han't seen her these two hours.—The poor dear creature!—I swear, my lord, you don't love poor little Sappho.—Come, my dear Cynthia, Mr. Brisk, we'll go see Sappho, though my lord won't.

Cyn. I'll wait upon your ladyship.

Brisk. Pray, madam, how old is lady Sappho?

Lady Froth. Three quarters; but I swear she has a world of wit, and can sing a tune already. —My lord, won't you go? won't you? what, not to see Saph? pray, my lord, come see little Saph. I knew you could not stay.

SCENE XII.

CYNTHIA.

'Tis not so hard to counterfeit joy in the depth of affliction, as to dissemble mirth in company of fools.—Why should I call 'em fools? the world thinks better of 'em; for these have quality and education, wit and fine conversation are received and admired by the world:—if not, they like and admire themselves.—And why is not that true wisdom, for 'tis happiness? and for aught I know, we have misapplied the name all this while, and mistaken the thing; since—

If happiness in self-content is placed,
The wise are wretched, and fools only bless'd.

[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Gallery in* Lord TOUCHWOOD'S *House.*

MELLEFONT *and* CYNTHIA.

Cyn. I heard him loud as I came by the closet door, and my lady with him, but she seemed to moderate his passion.

Mel. Ay, hell thank her, as gentle breezes moderate a fire: but I shall counterwork her spells, and ride the witch in her own bridle.

Cyn. It's impossible; she'll cast beyond you still.—I'll lay my life it will never come to be a match.

Mel. What?

Cyn. Between you and me.

Mel. Why so?

Cyn. My mind gives me it won't—because we are both willing; we each of us strive to reach the goal, and hinder one another in the race; I swear it never does well when the parties are so agreed. —For when people walk hand in hand, there's neither overtaking nor meeting: we hunt in couples, where we both pursue the same game, but forget one another; and 'tis because we are so near that we don't think of coming together.

Mel. Hum, 'gad I believe there's something in't;—marriage is the game that we hunt, and while we think that we only have it in view, I don't see but we have it in our power.

Cyn. Within reach; for example, give me your hand; you have looked through the wrong end of the perspective all this while; for nothing has been between us but our fears.

Mel. I don't know why we should not steal out of the house this very moment, and marry one another, without consideration, or the fear of repentance. Pox o' fortune, portion, settlements, and jointures!

Cyn. Ay, ay, what have we to do with 'em?—you know we marry for love.

Mel. Love, love, downright, very villanous love.

Cyn. And he that can't live upon love deserves to die in a ditch. Here, then, I give you my promise, in spite of duty, any temptation of wealth, your inconstancy, or my own inclination to change—

Mel. To run most wilfully and unreasonably away with me this moment, and be married.

Cyn. Hold!—never to marry anybody else.

Mel. That's but a kind of negative consent.—Why, you won't balk the frolic?

Cyn. If you had not been so assured of your own conduct I would not;—but 'tis but reasonable that since I consent to like a man without the vile consideration of money, he should give me a very evident demonstration of his wit; therefore let me see you undermine my lady Touchwood, as you boasted, and force her to give her consent, and then—

Mel. I'll do't.

Cyn. And I'll do't.

Mel. This very next ensuing hour of eight o'clock is the last minute of her reign, unless the devil assist her *in propria persona.*

Cyn. Well, if the devil should assist her, and your plot miscarry?

Mel. Ay, what am I to trust to then?

Cyn. Why, if you give me very clear demonstration that it was the devil, I'll allow for irresistible odds. But if I find it to be only chance, or destiny, or unlucky stars, or anything but the very devil, I am inexorable; only still I'll keep my word, and live a maid for your sake.

Mel. And you won't die one for your own; so still there's hope.

Cyn. Here's my mother-in-law, and your friend Careless; I would not have 'em see us together yet.

SCENE II.

CARELESS *and* LADY PLYANT.

Lady Ply. I swear, Mr. Careless, you are very alluring, and say so many fine things, and nothing is so moving to me as a fine thing. Well, I must do you this justice, and declare in the face of the world, never anybody gained so far upon me as yourself; with blushes I must own it, you have shaken, as I may say, the very foundation of my honour.—Well, sure if I escape your importunities, I shall value myself as long as I live, I swear.

Care. And despise me. [*Sighing.*

Lady Ply. The last of any man in the world, by my purity! now you make me swear.—O gratitude forbid, that I should ever be wanting in a respectful acknowledgment of an entire resignation of all my best wishes, for the person and parts of so accomplished a person, whose merit challenges much more, I'm sure, than my illiterate praises can description—

Care. [*In a whining tone.*] Ah Heavens, madam, you ruin me with kindness!—

Your charming tongue pursues the victory of your eyes,
While at your feet your poor adorer dies.

Lady Ply. Ah, very fine!

Care. [*Still whining.*] Ah! why are you so fair, so bewitching fair? O let me grow to the ground here, and feast upon that hand! O let me press it to my heart, my trembling heart! the nimble movement shall instruct your pulse, and teach it to alarm desire.—[*Aside.*] Zoons! I'm almost at the end of my cant if she does not yield quickly.

Lady Ply. O that's so passionate and fine I cannot hear it:—I am not safe if I stay, and must leave you.

Care. And must you leave me! rather let me languish out a wretched life, and breathe my soul beneath your feet!—[*Aside.*] I must say the same thing over again, and can't help it.

Lady Ply. I swear I'm ready to languish too.—O my honour! whither is it going? I protest you have given me the palpitation of the heart.

Care. Can you be so cruel?

Lady Ply. O rise, I beseech you! say no more till you rise.—Why did you kneel so long? I swear I was so transported I did not see it.—Well, to show you how far you have gained upon me, I assure you, if sir Paul should die, of all mankind there's none I'd sooner make my second choice.

Care. O Heaven! I can't outlive this night without your favour!—I feel my spirits faint, a general dampness overspreads my face, a cold deadly dew already vents through all my pores, and will to-morrow wash me for ever from your sight, and drown me in my tomb.

Lady Ply. O you have conquered, sweet, melting, moving sir, you have conquered!—What heart of marble can refrain to weep, and yield to such sad sayings! [*Cries.*

Care. I thank Heaven they are the saddest that I ever said.—Oh!—[*Aside.*] I shall never contain laughter.

Lady Ply. Oh, I yield myself all up to your uncontrollable embraces!—Say, thou dear, dying man, when, where, and how?—Ah, there's sir Paul!

Care. 'Slife, yonder's sir Paul; but if he were not come, I'm so transported I cannot speak.—This note will inform you. [*Gives her a note.*

SCENE III.

LADY PLYANT, SIR PAUL, *and* CYNTHIA.

Sir Paul. Thou art my tender lambkin, and shalt do what thou wilt.—But endeavour to forget this Mellefont.

Cyn. I would obey you to my power, sir; but if I have not him, I have sworn never to marry.

Sir Paul. Never to marry! Heavens forbid! must I neither have sons nor grandsons? must the family of the Plyants be utterly extinct for want of issue male? Oh, impiety! But did you swear? did that sweet creature swear? ha! how durst you swear without my consent; ah, gadsbud, who am I?

Cyn. Pray, don't be angry, sir: when I swore, I had your consent; and therefore I swore.

Sir Paul. Why, then, the revoking my consent does annul, or make of non-effect, your oath; so you may unswear it again;—the law will allow it.

Cyn. Ay, but my conscience never will.

Sir Paul. Gadsbud, no matter for that, conscience and law never go together, you must not expect that.

Lady Ply. Ay, but sir Paul, I conceive if she has sworn, d'ye mark me, if she has once sworn, it is most unchristian, inhuman, and obscene, that she should break it.—[*Aside.*] I'll make up the match again, because Mr. Careless said it would oblige him.

Sir Paul. Does your ladyship conceive so?—Why, I was of that opinion once too.—Nay, if your ladyship conceive so, I'm of that opinion again; but I can neither find my lord nor my lady, to know what they intend.

Lady Ply. I'm satisfied that my cousin Mellefont has been much wronged.

Cyn. [*Aside.*] I'm amazed to find her of our side, for I'm sure she loved him.

Lady Ply. I know my lady Touchwood has no kindness for him; and besides I have been informed by Mr. Careless, that Mellefont had never anything more than a profound respect.—That he has owned himself to be my admirer, 'tis true; but he was never so presumptuous to entertain any dishonourable notions of things; so that if this be made plain, I don't see how my daughter can in conscience or honour, or anything in the world—

Sir Paul. Indeed if this be made plain, as my lady your mother says, child—

Lady Ply. Plain! I was informed of it by Mr. Careless;—and I assure you, Mr. Careless is a person—that has a most extraordinary respect and honour for you, sir Paul.

Cyn. [*Aside.*] And for your ladyship too, I believe, or else you had not changed sides so soon;—now I begin to find it.

Sir Paul. I am much obliged to Mr. Careless really, he is a person that I have a great value for, not only for that, but because he has a great veneration for your ladyship.

Lady Ply. O las! no indeed, sir Paul; 'tis upon your account.

Sir Paul. No, I protest and vow, I have no title

to his esteem, but in having the honour to appertain in some measure to your ladyship, that's all.

Lady Ply. O la now! I swear and declare, it shan't be so; you're too modest, sir Paul.

Sir Paul. It becomes me, when there is any comparison made between—

Lady Ply. O fy, fy, sir Paul! you'll put me out of countenance—your very obedient and affectionate wife; that's all—and highly honoured in that title.

Sir Paul. Gadsbud, I'm transported! give me leave to kiss your ladyship's hand.

Cyn. That my poor father should be so very silly. [*Aside.*

Lady Ply. My lip, indeed, sir Paul, I swear you shall. [*He kisses her, and bows very low.*

Sir Paul. I humbly thank your ladyship.—[*Aside.*] I don't know whether I fly on ground, or walk in air.—Gadsbud! she was never thus before.—Well, I must own myself the most beholden to Mr. Careless.—As sure as can be this is all his doing—something that he has said—well, 'tis a rare thing to have an ingenious friend.—[*Aloud.*] Well, your ladyship is of opinion that the match may go forward?

Lady Ply. By all means; Mr. Careless has satisfied me of the matter.

Sir Paul. Well, why then, lamb, you may keep your oath, but have a care of making rash vows; come hither to me, and kiss papa.

Lady Ply. [*Aside.*] I swear and declare, I'm in such a twitter to read Mr. Careless's letter, that I can't forbear any longer.—But though I may read all letters first by prerogative, yet I'll be sure to be unsuspected this time.—[*Aloud.*] Sir Paul!

Sir Paul. Did your ladyship call?

Lady Ply. Nay, not to interrupt you, my dear—only lend me your letter, which you had from your steward to-day; I would look upon the account again, and maybe increase your allowance.

Sir Paul. There it is, madam; do you want a pen and ink? [*Bows and gives the letter.*

Lady Ply. No, no, nothing else, I thank you, sir Paul.—[*Aside.*] So, now I can read my own letter under the cover of his.

Sir Paul. [*To* CYNTHIA.] He! and wilt thou bring a grandson at nine months' end, he!—a brave chopping boy? I'll settle a thousand pound a year upon the rogue, as soon as ever he looks me in the face; I will, gadsbud! I'm overjoyed to think I have any of my family that will bring children into the world. For I would fain have some resemblance of myself in my posterity, hey, Thy? Can't you contrive that affair, girl? do, gadsbud, think on thy old father, he? make the young rogue as like as you can.

Cyn. I'm glad to see you so merry, sir.

Sir Paul. Merry! gadsbud, I'm serious; I'll give thee five hundred pounds for every inch of him that resembles me; ah this eye, this left eye! a thousand pound for this left eye. This has done execution in its time, girl; why thou hast my leer, hussy, just thy father's leer:—let it be transmitted to the young rogue by the help of imagination; why 'tis the mark of our family, Thy; our house is distinguished by a languishing eye, as the house of Austria is by a thick lip.—Ah! when I was of your age, hussy, I would have held fifty to one I could have drawn my own picture.—Gadsbud! I could have done—not so much as you neither,—but—nay, don't blush—

Cyn. I don't blush, sir, for I vow I don't understand—

Sir Paul. Pshaw! pshaw! you fib, you baggage; you do understand, and you shall understand. Come, don't be so nice; gadsbud, don't learn after your mother-in-law my lady here: marry, Heaven forbid that you should follow her example! that would spoil all indeed. Bless us, if you should take a vagary and make a rash resolution on your wedding night to die a maid, as she did, all were ruined, all my hopes lost!—My heart would break, and my estate would be left to the wide world, he? I hope you are a better Christian than to think of living a nun; he? Answer me.

Cyn. I'm all obedience, sir, to your commands.

Lady Ply. [*Aside.*] O dear Mr. Careless! I swear he writes charmingly, and he looks charmingly, and he has charmed me, as much as I have charmed him; and so I'll tell him in the wardrobe when 'tis dark. O crimine! I hope sir Paul has not seen both letters.—[*Puts the wrong letter hastily up, and gives him her own.*] Sir Paul, here's your letter; to-morrow morning I'll settle accounts to your advantage.

SCENE IV.

Lady PLYANT, Sir PAUL, CYNTHIA, *and* BRISK.

Brisk. Sir Paul, gadsbud, you're an uncivil person, let me tell you, and all that; and I did not think it had been in you.

Sir Paul. O la! what's the matter now? I hope you are not angry, Mr. Brisk.

Brisk. Deuse take me, I believe you intend to marry your daughter yourself! you're always brooding over her like an old hen, as if she were not well hatched, egad, he?

Sir Paul. Good, strange! Mr. Brisk is such a merry facetious person, he! he! he!—No, no, I have done with her, I have done with her now.

Brisk. The fiddlers have stayed this hour in the hall, and my lord Froth wants a partner, we can never begin without her.

Sir Paul. Go, go, child, go, get you gone and dance and be merry, I'll come and look at you by and by.—Where's my son Mellefont?

Lady Ply. I'll send him to them, I know where he is.

Brisk. Sir Paul, will you send Careless into the hall if you meet him?

Sir Paul. I will, I will; I'll go and look for him on purpose.

SCENE V.

BRISK.

So, now they are all gone, and I have an opportunity to practise.—Ah! my dear lady Froth! she's a most engaging creature, if she were not so fond of that damned coxcombly lord of hers; and yet I am forced to allow him wit too, to keep in with him.—No matter, she's a woman of parts, and egad parts will carry her. She said she would follow me into the gallery.—Now to make my ap-

proaches.—Hem, hem!—[*Bows.*] Ah, madam!——Pox on't, why should I disparage my parts by thinking what to say? None but dull rogues think; witty men, like rich fellows, are always ready for all expenses; while your blockheads, like poor needy scoundrels, are forced to examine their stock, and forecast the charges of the day.—Here she comes, I'll seem not to see her, and try to win her with a new airy invention of my own, hem!

SCENE VI.

BRISK *and* LADY FROTH.

Brisk. [*Walks about, singing.*] *I'm sick with love,*—ha! ha! ha!—*prithee come cure me.*
I'm sick with, &c.
O ye powers! O my lady Froth! my lady Froth! my lady Froth! Heigho! Break heart! Gods, I thank you! [*Stands musing with his arms across.*

Lady Froth. O heavens, Mr. Brisk! what's the matter?

Brisk. My lady Froth! your ladyship's most humble servant.—The matter, madam? nothing, madam, nothing at all egad. I was fallen into the most agreeable amusement in the whole province of contemplation: that's all.—[*Aside.*] I'll seem to conceal my passion, and that will look like respect.

Lady Froth. Bless me! why did you call out upon me so loud?

Brisk. O Lord, I, madam? I beseech your ladyship—when?

Lady Froth. Just now as I came in: bless me! why don't you know it?

Brisk. Not I, let me perish!—But did I? Strange! I confess your ladyship was in my thoughts; and I was in a sort of dream that did in a manner present a very pleasing object to my imagination, but—but did I indeed?—To see how love and murder will out! But did I really name my lady Froth?

Lady Froth. Three times aloud, as I love letters!—But did you talk of love? O Parnassus! who would have thought Mr. Brisk could have been in love, ha! ha! ha! O heavens, I thought you could have no mistress but the nine Muses.

Brisk. No more I have, egad, for I adore 'em all in your ladyship.—Let me perish, I don't know whether to be splenetic or airy upon't; the deuse take me if I can tell whether I am glad or sorry that your ladyship has made the discovery.

Lady Froth. O be merry by all means.—Prince Volscius in love! ha! ha! ha!

Brisk. O barbarous, to turn me into ridicule! Yet, ha! ha! ha!—the deuse take me, I can't help laughing myself, ha! ha! ha!—yet by heavens! I have a violent passion for your ladyship, seriously.

Lady Froth. Seriously? ha! ha! ha!

Brisk. Seriously, ha! ha! ha! Gad I have, for all I laugh.

Lady Froth. Ha! ha! ha!—What d'ye think I laugh at? ha! ha! ha!

Brisk. Me, egad, ha! ha!

Lady Froth. No, the deuse take me if I don't laugh at myself; for hang me! if I have not a violent passion for Mr. Brisk, ha! ha! ha!

Brisk. Seriously?

Lady Froth. Seriously, ha! ha! ha!

Brisk. That's well enough; let me perish, ha! ha! ha! O miraculous! what a happy discovery; ah, my dear charming lady Froth!

Lady Froth. O my adored Mr. Brisk! [*Embrace.*

SCENE VII.

BRISK, LADY FROTH, *and* LORD FROTH.

Lord Froth. The company are all ready.—[*Aside.*] How now!

Brisk. [*Aside to* LADY FROTH.] Zoons, madam, there's my lord!

Lady Froth. [*Aside to* BRISK.] Take no notice—but observe me—[*Aloud.*] Now cast off, and meet me at the lower end of the room, and then join hands again; I could teach my lord this dance purely, but I vow, Mr. Brisk, I can't tell how to come so near any other man.—[*They pretend to practise part of a country dance.*] Oh, here's my lord, now you shall see me do it with him.

Lord Froth. Oh, I see there's no harm yet:—but I don't like this familiarity. [*Aside.*

Lady Froth. Shall you and I do our close dance, to show Mr. Brisk?

Lord Froth. No, my dear, do it with him.

Lady Froth. I'll do it with him, my lord, when you are out of the way.

Brisk. [*Aside.*] That's good, egad, that's good! deuse take me, I can hardly hold laughing in his face!

Lord Froth. Any other time, my dear, or we'll dance it below.

Lady Froth. With all my heart.

Brisk. Come, my lord, I'll wait on you—[*Aside to* LADY FROTH] My charming witty angel!

Lady Froth. [*Aside to* BRISK.] We shall have whispering time enough, you know, since we are partners.

SCENE VIII.

LADY PLYANT, *and* CARELESS.

Lady Ply. O Mr. Careless! Mr. Careless! I'm ruined! I'm undone!

Care. What's the matter, madam?

Lady Ply. O the unluckiest accident! I'm afraid I shan't live to tell it you.

Care. Heaven forbid! what is it?

Lady Ply. I'm in such a fright! the strangest quandary and premunire! I'm all over in a universal agitation, I dare swear every circumstance of me trembles.—O your letter, your letter!—by an unfortunate mistake, I have given Sir Paul your letter instead of his own.

Care. That was unlucky.

Lady Ply. O yonder he comes reading of it! for heaven's sake step in here and advise me quickly before he sees!

SCENE IX.

SIR PAUL *with a letter.*

Sir Paul. O providence! what a conspiracy have I discovered!—But let me see to make an

end on't.—[*Reads.*] Hum—*After supper in the wardrobe by the gallery, if sir Paul should surprise us, I have a commission from him to treat with you about the very matter of fact.* Matter of fact! very pretty; it seems then I am conducing to my own cuckoldom; why this is the very traitorous position of taking up arms by my authority, against my person. Well, let me see—*Till then I languish in expectation of my adored charmer.*—*Dying* Ned Careless. Gadsbud, would that were matter of fact too! Die and be damned! for a Judas Maccabeus, and Iscariot both! O friendship! what art thou but a name! Henceforward let no man make a friend that would not be a cuckold! for whomsoever he receives into his bosom, will find the way to his bed, and there return his caresses with interest to his wife. Have I for this been pinioned night after night for three years past? have I been swathed in blankets till I have been even deprived of motion? have I approached the marriage-bed with reverence as to a sacred shrine, and denied myself the enjoyment of lawful domestic pleasures to preserve its purity, and must I now find it polluted by foreign iniquity? O my lady Plyant, you were chaste as ice, but you are melted now, and false as water!—But Providence has been constant to me in discovering this conspiracy; still I am beholden to Providence; if it were not for Providence, sure, poor sir Paul, thy heart would break.

SCENE X.

Sir Paul *and* Lady Plyant.

Lady Ply. So, sir, I see you have read the letter.—Well now, sir Paul, what do you think of your friend Careless? has he been treacherous, or did you give his insolence a licence to make trial of your wife's suspected virtue? D'ye see here? [*Snatches the letter as in anger.*] Look, read it? Gads my life, if I thought it were so, I would this moment renounce all communication with you! Ungrateful monster! he? is it so? ay, I see it, a plot upon my honour; your guilty cheeks confess it. Oh where shall wronged virtue fly for reparation! I'll be divorced this instant!

Sir Paul. Gadsbud! what shall I say? this is the strangest surprise! Why I don't know anything at all, nor I don't know whether there be anything at all in the world or no.

Lady Ply. I thought I should try you, false man! I that never dissembled in my life, yet to make trial of you, pretended to like that monster of iniquity, Careless, and found out that contrivance to let you see this letter; which now I find was of your own inditing;—I do, heathen, I do!—See my face no more, I'll be divorced presently!

Sir Paul. O strange, what will become of me!—I'm so amazed, and so overjoyed, so afraid, and so sorry.—But did you give me this letter on purpose, he? did you?

Lady Ply. Did I! do you doubt me, Turk, Saracen? I have a cousin that's a proctor in the Commons, I'll go to him instantly.

Sir Paul. Hold! stay! I beseech your ladyship! I'm so overjoyed, stay, I'll confess all.

Lady Ply. What will you confess, Jew?

Sir Paul. Why now, as I hope to be saved, I had no hand in this letter.—Nay hear me, I beseech your ladyship: the devil take me now if he did not go beyond my commission.—If I desired him to do any more than speak a good word only just for me; gadsbud, only for poor sir Paul, I'm an anabaptist, or a Jew, or what you please to call me.

Lady Ply. Why, is not here matter of fact?

Sir Paul. Ay, but, by your own virtue and continency, that matter of fact is all his own doing.—I confess I had a great desire to have some honours conferred upon me, which lie all in your ladyship's breast, and he being a well-spoken man, I desired him to intercede for me.

Lady Ply. Did you so, presumption!—Oh, he comes! the Tarquin comes! I cannot bear his sight.

SCENE XI.

Careless *and* Sir Paul.

Care. Sir Paul, I'm glad I've met with you: 'gad I have said all I could, but can't prevail.—Then my friendship to you has carried me a little farther in this matter—

Sir Paul. Indeed!—Well, sir.—[*Aside.*] I'll dissemble with him a little.

Care. Why, faith, I have in my time known honest gentlemen abused by a pretended coyness in their wives, and I had a mind to try my lady's virtue:—and when I could not prevail for you, 'gad I pretended to be in love myself.—But all in vain; she would not hear a word upon that subject; then I writ a letter to her; I don't know what effects that will have, but I'll be sure to tell you when I do; though, by this light, I believe her virtue is impregnable.

Sir Paul. O Providence! Providence! what discoveries are here made? why, this is better and more miraculous than the rest.

Care. What do you mean?

Sir Paul. I can't tell you, I'm so overjoyed; come along with me to my lady, I can't contain myself; come, my dear friend.

Care. So, so, so, this difficulty's over. [*Aside.*

SCENE XII.

Mellefont, Maskwell, *from different doors.*

Mel. Maskwell! I have been looking for you:—'tis within a quarter of eight.

Mask. My lady is just gone into my lord's closet, you had best steal into her chamber before she comes, and lie concealed there, otherwise she may lock the door when we are together, and you not easily get in to surprise us.

Mel. He! you say true.

Mask. You had best make haste; for after she has made some apology to the company for her own and my lord's absence all this while, she'll retire to her chamber instantly.

Mel. I go this moment. Now Fortune, I defy thee!

SCENE XIII.

MASKWELL.

I confess you may be allowed to be secure in your own opinion; the appearance is very fair, but I have an after game to play that shall turn the tables; and here comes the man that I must manage.

SCENE XIV.

MASKWELL *and* Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Lord Touch. Maskwell, you are the man I wished to meet.

Mask. I am happy to be in the way of your lordship's commands.

Lord Touch. I have always found you prudent and careful in anything that has concerned me or my family.

Mask. I were a villain else!—I am bound by duty and gratitude, and my own inclination, to be ever your lordship's servant.

Lord Touch. Enough—you are my friend; I know it. Yet there has been a thing in your knowledge which has concerned me nearly, that you have concealed from me.

Mask. My lord!

Lord Touch. Nay, I excuse your friendship to my unnatural nephew thus far;—but I know you have been privy to his impious designs upon my wife. This evening she has told me all; her good-nature concealed it as long as was possible; but he perseveres so in villany that she has told me even you were weary of dissuading him, though you have once actually hindered him from forcing her.

Mask. I am sorry, my lord, I can't make you an answer; this is an occasion in which I would willingly be silent.

Lord Touch. I know you would excuse him; and I know as well that you can't.

Mask. Indeed I was in hopes 't had been a youthful heat that might have soon boiled over; but—

Lord Touch. Say on.

Mask. I have nothing more to say, my lord—but to express my concern; for I think his frenzy increases daily.

Lord Touch. How! give me but proof of it, ocular proof, that I may justify my dealing with him to the world, and share my fortunes.

Mask. O my lord! consider that is hard; besides, time may work upon him: then, for me to do it! I have professed an everlasting friendship to him.

Lord Touch. He is your friend, and what am I?

Mask. I am answered.

Lord Touch. Fear not his displeasure; I will put you out of his and Fortune's power; and for that thou art scrupulously honest, I will secure thy fidelity to him, and give my honour never to own any discovery that you shall make me. Can you give me a demonstrative proof? speak.

Mask. I wish I could not!—To be plain, my lord, I intended this evening to have tried all arguments to dissuade him from a design which I suspect; and if I had not succeeded, to have informed your lordship of what I knew.

Lord Touch. I thank you. What is the villain's purpose?

Mask. He has owned nothing to me of late, and what I mean now is only a bare suspicion of my own. If your lordship will meet me a quarter of an hour hence there, in that lobby by my lady's bedchamber, I shall be able to tell you more.

Lord Touch. I will.

Mask. My duty to your lordship makes me do a severe piece of justice.

Lord Touch. I will be secret, and reward your honesty beyond your hopes.

SCENE XV.—Lady TOUCHWOOD's *Chamber.*

MELLEFONT.

Pray heaven my aunt keep touch with her assignation!—Oh that her lord were but sweating behind this hanging, with the expectation of what I shall see!—Hist! she comes.—Little does she think what a mine is just ready to spring under her feet. But to my post.

[*Conceals himself behind the hangings.*

SCENE XVI.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

'Tis eight o'clock: methinks I should have found him here. Who does not prevent the hour of love outstays the time; for to be dully punctual, is too slow.—[*To* MASKWELL, *entering.*] I was accusing you of neglect.

SCENE XVII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD *and* MASKWELL.

Mask. I confess you do reproach me when I see you here before me; but 'tis fit I should be still behind-hand, still to be more and more indebted to your goodness.

Lady Touch. You can excuse a fault too well, not to have been to blame.—A ready answer shows you were prepared.

Mask. Guilt is ever at a loss, and confusion waits upon it; when innocence and bold truth are always ready for expression—

Lady Touch. Not in love; words are the weak support of cold indifference; love has no language to be heard.

Mask. Excess of joy has made me stupid! Thus may my lips be ever closed.—[*Kisses her.*] And thus—Oh, who would not lose his speech, upon condition to have joys above it?

Lady Touch. Hold, let me lock the door first.

[*Goes to the door.*

Mask. [*Aside.*] That I believed; 'twas well I left the private passage open.

Lady Touch. So, that's safe.

Mask. And so may all your pleasures be, and secret as this kiss.

Mel. [*Leaping out.*] And may all treachery be thus discovered!

Lady Touch. Ah! [*Shrieks.*

Mel. Villain! [*Offers to draw.*

Mask. Nay, then, there's but one way.

[*Runs out.*

SCENE XVIII.

Lady Touchwood *and* Mellefont.

Mel. Say you so, were you provided for an escape?—Hold, madam, you have no more holes to your burrow, I'll stand between you and this sally-port.

Lady Touch. Thunder strike thee dead for this deceit! immediate lightning blast thee, me, and the whole world!—Oh! I could rack myself, play the vulture to my own heart, and gnaw it piecemeal, for not boding to me this misfortune!

Mel. Be patient.

Lady Touch. Be damned!

Mel. Consider I have you on the hook; you will but flounder yourself a-weary, and be nevertheless my prisoner.

Lady Touch. I'll hold my breath and die, but I'll be free.

Mel. O madam, have a care of dying unprepared. I doubt you have some unrepented sins that may hang heavy, and retard your flight.

Lady Touch. Oh, what shall I do? say? whither shall I turn? Has hell no remedy?

Mel. None, hell has served you even as heaven has done, left you to yourself.—You're in a kind of Erasmus' paradise; yet, if you please, you may make it a purgatory; and with a little penance and my absolution, all this may turn to good account.

Lady Touch. [*Aside.*] Hold in, my passion! and fall, fall a little, thou swelling heart! let me have some intermission of this rage, and one minute's coolness to dissemble. [*She weeps.*

Mel. You have been to blame—I like those tears, and hope they are of the purest kind—penitential tears.

Lady Touch. O the scene was shifted quick before me!—I had not time to think—I was surprised to see a monster in the glass, and now I find 'tis myself. Can you have mercy to forgive the faults I have imagined, but never put in practice?—O consider, consider how fatal you have been to me! you have already killed the quiet of this life. The love of you was the first wandering fire that e'er misled my steps, and while I had only that in view, I was betrayed into unthought-of ways of ruin.

Mel. May I believe this true?

Lady Touch. O be not cruelly incredulous!—How can you doubt these streaming eyes? Keep the severest eye o'er all my future conduct; and if I once relapse, let me not hope forgiveness, 'twill ever be in your power to ruin me.—My lord shall sign to your desires; I will myself create your happiness, and Cynthia shall be this night your bride.—Do but conceal my failings, and forgive.

Mel. Upon such terms, I will be ever yours in every honest way.

SCENE XIX.

Maskwell *softly introduces* Lord Touchwood, *and retires.*

Mask. I have kept my word, he's here, but I must not be seen.

SCENE XX.

Lady Touchwood, Lord Touchwood, *and* Mellefont.

Lord Touch. [*Aside.*] Hell and amazement! she's in tears.

Lady Touch. [*Kneeling.*] Eternal blessings thank you!—[*Aside.*] Ha! my lord listening! O Fortune has o'erpaid me all, all! all's my own!

Mel. Nay, I beseech you rise.

Lady Touch. Never, never! I'll grow to the ground, be buried quick beneath it, ere I'll be consenting to so damned a sin as incest! unnatural incest!

Mel. Ha!

Lady Touch. O cruel man! will you not let me go?—I'll forgive all that's past—O heaven, you will not ravish me!

Mel. Damnation!

Lord Touch. Monster! dog! your life shall answer this—

[*Draws, and runs at* Mellefont, *is held by* Lady Touchwood.

Lady Touch. O heavens, my lord! Hold, hold, for heaven's sake!

Mel. Confusion, my uncle! O the damned sorceress! [*Aside.*

Lady Touch. Moderate your rage, good my lord! he's mad, alas, he's mad!—Indeed he is, my lord, and knows not what he does.—See, how wild he looks!

Mel. By heaven 'twere senseless not to be mad, and see such witchcraft!

Lady Touch. My lord, you hear him, he talks idly.

Lord Touch. Hence from my sight, thou living infamy to my name! when next I see that face I'll write villain in't with my sword's point.

Mel. Now, by my soul, I will not go till I have made known my wrongs!—nay, till I have made known yours, which (if possible) are greater—though she has all the host of hell her servants.

Lady Touch. Alas, he raves! talks very poetry! For heaven's sake, away, my lord! he'll either tempt you to extravagance, or commit some himself.

Mel. Death and furies! will you not hear me? Why by heaven she laughs, grins, points to your back! she forks out cuckoldom with her fingers, and you're running horn-mad after your fortune!

[*As* Lady Touchwood *retires she turns back and smiles at him.*

Lord Touch. I fear he's mad indeed:—let's send Maskwell to him.

Mel. Send him to her.

Lady Touch. Come, come, good my lord, my heart aches so, I shall faint if I stay.

SCENE XXI.

Mellefont.

O I could curse my stars! fate and chance! all causes and accidents of fortune in this life! But to what purpose? Yet 'sdeath! for a man to have the fruit of all his industry grow full and ripe,

ready to drop into his mouth, and just when he holds out his hand to gather it, to have a sudden whirlwind come, tear up tree and all, and bear away the very root and foundation of his hopes; what temper can contain? They talk of sending Maskwell to me; I never had more need of him.—But what can he do? Imagination cannot form a fairer and more plausible design than this of his which has miscarried.—O my precious aunt! I shall never thrive without I deal with the devil, or another woman.

Women, like flames, have a destroying power,
Ne'er to be quench'd, 'till they themselves devour. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Gallery in* Lord Touchwood's *House.*

Lady Touchwood *and* Maskwell.

Lady Touch. Was't not lucky?

Mask. Lucky! Fortune is your own, and 'tis her interest so to be. By heaven, I believe you can control her power! and she fears it; though chance brought my lord, 'twas your own art that turned it to advantage.

Lady Touch. 'Tis true, it might have been my ruin—But yonder's my lord, I believe he's coming to find you. I'll not be seen.

SCENE II.

Maskwell.

So; I durst not own my introducing my lord, though it succeeded well for her, for she would have suspected a design which I should have been puzzled to excuse. My lord is thoughtful—I'll be so too; yet he shall know my thoughts; or think he does.

SCENE III.

Maskwell *and* Lord Touchwood.

Mask. What have I done?

Lord Touch. Talking to himself! [*Aside.*

Mask. 'Twas honest—and shall I be rewarded for it! No, 'twas honest, therefore I shan't.—Nay, rather therefore I ought not; for it rewards itself.

Lord Touch. Unequalled virtue! [*Aside.*

Mask. But should it be known! then I have lost a friend. He was an ill-man, and I have gained: for half myself I lent him, and that I have recalled; so I have served myself, and what is yet better, I have served a worthy lord, to whom I owe myself.

Lord Touch. Excellent man! [*Aside.*

Mask. Yet I am wretched.—O there is a secret burns within this breast, which should it once blaze forth, would ruin all, consume my honest character, and brand me with the name of villain!

Lord Touch. Ha! [*Aside.*

Mask. Why do I love! Yet heaven and my waking conscience are my witnesses, I never gave one working thought a vent, which might discover that I loved, nor ever must; no, let it prey upon my heart; for I would rather die, than seem once, barely seem dishonest.—O, should it once be known I love fair Cynthia, all this that I have done would look like rival's malice, false friendship to my lord, and base self-interest. Let me perish first, and from this hour avoid all sight and speech, and, if I can, all thought of that pernicious beauty. Ha! but what is my distraction doing! I am wildly talking to myself, and some ill chance might have directed malicious ears this way.

[*Seems to start, seeing* Lord Touchwood.

Lord Touch. Start not—let guilty and dishonest souls start at the revelation of their thoughts, but be thou fixed as is thy virtue.

Mask. I am confounded, and beg your lordship's pardon for those free discourses which I have had with myself.

Lord Touch. Come, I beg your pardon that I overheard you, and yet it shall not need. Honest Maskwell! thy and my good genius led me hither: mine, in that I have discovered so much manly virtue; thine, in that thou shalt have due reward of all thy worth. Give me thy hand—my nephew is the alone remaining branch of all our ancient family; him I thus blow away, and constitute thee in his room to be my heir.

Mask. Now, heaven forbid—

Lord Touch. No more—I have resolved.—The writings are ready drawn, and wanted nothing but to be signed, and have his name inserted:—yours will fill the blank as well.—I will have no reply.—Let me command this time; for 'tis the last in which I will assume authority—hereafter you shall rule where I have power.

Mask. I humbly would petition—

Lord Touch. Is't for yourself?—[Maskwell *pauses.*] I'll hear of nought for anybody else.

Mask. Then, witness heaven for me, this wealth and honour was not of my seeking, nor would I build my fortune on another's ruin: I had but one desire—

Lord Touch. Thou shalt enjoy it.—If all I'm worth in wealth or interest can purchase Cynthia, she is thine.—I'm sure sir Paul's consent will follow fortune; I'll quickly show him which way that is going.

Mask. You oppress me with bounty; my gratitude is weak, and shrinks beneath the weight, and cannot rise to thank you.—What, enjoy my love!—Forgive the transports of a blessing so unexpected, so unhoped for, so unthought of!

Lord Touch. I will confirm it, and rejoice with thee.

SCENE IV.

MASKWELL.

This is prosperous indeed!—Why, let him find me out a villain, settled in possession of a fair estate, and ull fruition of my love, I'll bear the railings of a losing gamester.—But should he find me out before! 'tis dangerous to delay.—Let me think—should my lord proceed to treat openly of my marriage with Cynthia, all must be discovered, and Mellefont can be no longer blinded.—It must not be; nay, should my lady know it—ay, then were fine work indeed! Her fury would spare nothing, though she involved herself in ruin. No, it must be by stratagem—I must deceive Mellefont once more, and get my lord to consent to my private management. He comes opportunely.—Now will I, in my old way, discover the whole and real truth of the matter to him, that he may not suspect one word on't.

No mask like open truth to cover lies,
As to go naked is the best disguise.

SCENE V.

MASKWELL *and* MELLEFONT.

Mel. O Maskwell, what hopes? I am confounded in a maze of thoughts, each leading into one another, and all ending in perplexity. My uncle will not see nor hear me.

Mask. No matter, sir, don't trouble your head, all's in my power.

Mel. How? for heaven's sake?

Mask. Little do you think that your aunt has kept her word!—How the devil she wrought my lord into this dotage, I know not; but he's gone to sir Paul about my marriage with Cynthia, and has appointed me his heir.

Mel. The devil he has! What's to be done?

Mask. I have it!—it must be by stratagem; for it's in vain to make application to him. I think I have that in my head that cannot fail.—Where's Cynthia?

Mel. In the garden.

Mask. Let us go and consult her: my life for yours, I cheat my lord!

SCENE VI.

Lord TOUCHWOOD *and* Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Lady Touch. Maskwell your heir, and marry Cynthia!

Lord Touch. I cannot do too much for so much merit.

Lady Touch. But this is a thing of too great moment to be so suddenly resolved. Why Cynthia? why must he be married? Is there not reward enough in raising his low fortune, but he must mix his blood with mine, and wed my niece? How know you that my brother will consent, or she? nay, he himself perhaps may have affections otherwhere.

Lord Touch. No, I am convinced he loves her.

Lady Touch. Maskwell love Cynthia! impossible!

Lord Touch. I tell you he confessed it to me.

Lady Touch. Confusion! how's this! [*Aside.*

Lord Touch. His humility long stifled his passion; and his love of Mellefont would have made him still conceal it.—But by encouragement, I wrung the secret from him; and know he's no way to be rewarded but in her. I'll defer my farther proceedings in it till you have considered it; but remember how we are both indebted to him.

SCENE VII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Both indebted to him! Yes, we are both indebted to him, if you knew all. Villain! Oh, I am wild with this surprise of treachery! It is impossible, it cannot be!—He love Cynthia! What, have I been bawd to his designs, his property only, a baiting place! Now I see what made him false to Mellefont.—Shame and distraction! I cannot bear it. Oh! what woman can bear to be a property? To be kindled to a flame, only to light him to another's arms! Oh, that I were fire indeed, that I might burn the vile traitor! What shall I do? how shall I think? I cannot think.—All my designs are lost, my love unsated, my revenge unfinished, and fresh cause of fury from unthought-of plagues.

SCENE VIII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD *and* Sir PAUL.

Sir Paul. Madam! sister! my lady sister! did you see my lady, my wife?

Lady Touch. Oh, torture! [*Aside.*

Sir Paul. Gadsbud, I can't find her high nor low; where can she be, think you?

Lady Touch. Where she's serving you, as all your sex ought to be served; making you a beast. Don't you know that you're a fool, brother?

Sir Paul. A fool! he! he! he! you're merry.—No, no, not I, I know no such matter.

Lady Touch. Why, then, you don't know half your happiness.

Sir Paul. That's a jest with all my heart, faith and troth!—But hark ye, my lord told me something of a revolution of things; I don't know what to make on't.—Gadsbud, I must consult my wife.—He talks of disinheriting his nephew, and I don't know what.—Look you, sister, I must know what my girl has to trust to; or not a syllable of a wedding, gadsbud—to show you that I am not a fool.

Lady Touch. Hear me; consent to the breaking off this marriage, and the promoting any other, without consulting me, and I'll renounce all blood, all relation and concern with you for ever;—nay, I'll be your enemy, and pursue you to destruction; I'll tear your eyes out, and tread you under my feet.

Sir Paul. Why, what's the matter now? Good Lord, what's all this for? Pooh, here's a joke, indeed!—Why, where's my wife?

Lady Touch. With Careless, in the close arbour; he may want you by this time, as much as you want her.

Sir Paul. O, if she be with Mr. Careless, 'tis well enough.

Lady Touch. Fool! sot! insensible ox! But remember what I said to you, or you had better eat your own horns; by this light you had.

Sir Paul. You're a passionate woman, gadsbud!—But to say truth, all our family are choleric; I am the only peaceable person amongst 'em.

SCENE IX.

MELLEFONT, MASKWELL, *and* CYNTHIA.

Mel. I know no other way but this he has proposed; if you have love enough to run the venture.

Cyn. I don't know whether I have love enough—but I find I have obstinacy enough to pursue whatever I have once resolved; and a true female courage to oppose anything that resists my will, though 'twere reason itself.

Mask. That's right.—Well, I'll secure the writings, and run the hazard along with you.

Cyn. But how can the coach and six horses be got ready without suspicion?

Mask. Leave it to my care; that shall be so far from being suspected, that it shall be got ready by my lord's own order.

Mel. How?

Mask. Why, I intend to tell my lord the whole matter of our contrivance, that's my way.

Mel. I don't understand you.

Mask. Why, I'll tell my lord I laid this plot with you on purpose to betray you; and that which put me upon it was the finding it impossible to gain the lady any other way, but in the hopes of her marrying you.

Mel. So—

Mask. So, why so, while you're busied in making yourself ready, I'll wheedle her into the coach; and instead of you, borrow my lord's chaplain, and so run away with her myself.

Mel. O, I conceive you; you'll tell him so?

Mask. Tell him so! ay; why, you don't think I mean to do so?

Mel. No, no; ha! ha! I dare swear thou wilt not.

Mask. Therefore, for our farther security, I would have you disguised like a parson, that if my lord should have curiosity to peep, he may not discover you in the coach, but think the cheat is carried on as he would have it.

Mel. Excellent Maskwell! thou wert certainly meant for a statesman or a Jesuit—but that thou art too honest for one, and too pious for the other.

Mask. Well, get yourselves ready, and meet me in half an hour, yonder in my lady's dressing-room; go by the back stairs, and so we may slip down without being observed.—I'll send the chaplain to you with his robes; I have made him my own, and ordered him to meet us to-morrow morning at St. Alban's; there we will sum up this account, to all our satisfactions.

Mel. Should I begin to thank or praise thee, I should waste the little time we have.

SCENE X.

CYNTHIA *and* MASKWELL.

Mask. Madam, you will be ready?

Cyn. I will be punctual to the minute. [*Going.*

Mask. Stay, I have a doubt.—Upon second thoughts we had better meet in the chaplain's chamber here, the corner chamber at this end of the gallery: there is a back way into it, so that you need not come through this door—and a pair of private stairs leading down to the stables.—It will be more convenient.

Cyn. I am guided by you,—but Mellefont will mistake.

Mask. No, no, I'll after him immediately, and tell him.

Cyn. I will not fail.

SCENE XI.

MASKWELL.

Why, *qui vult decipi decipiatur.*—'Tis no fault of mine: I have told 'em, in plain terms, how easy 'tis for me to cheat 'em; and, if they will not hear the serpent's hiss, they must be stung into experience, and future caution.—Now to prepare my lord to consent to this.—But first I must instruct my little Levite; there is no plot, public or private, that can expect to prosper without one of them has a finger in't: he promised me to be within at this hour.—Mr. Saygrace! Mr. Saygrace!

[*Goes to the chamber door, and knocks.*

SCENE XII.

MASKWELL *and* SAYGRACE.

Say. [*Looking out.*] Sweet sir, I will but pen the last line of an acrostic, and be with you in the twinkling of an ejaculation, in the pronouncing of an amen, or before you can—

Mask. Nay, good Mr. Saygrace, do not prolong the time, by describing to me the shortness of your stay; rather, if you please, defer the finishing of your wit, and let us talk about our business: it shall be tithes in your way.

Say. [*Enters.*] You shall prevail: I would break off in the middle of a sermon to do you a pleasure.

Mask. You could not do me a greater,—except—the business in hand.—Have you provided a habit for Mellefont?

Say. I have; they are ready in my chamber, together with a clean starched band and cuffs.

Mask. Good, let them be carried to him.—Have you stitched the gown sleeve, that he may be puzzled, and waste time in putting it on?

Say. I have; the gown will not be indued without perplexity.

Mask. Meet me in half an hour here in your own chamber. When Cynthia comes let there be no light, and do not speak, that she may not distinguish you from Mellefont. I'll urge haste to excuse your silence.

Say. You have no more commands?

Mask. None; your text is short.

Say. But pithy, and I will handle it with discretion. [*Exit.*

Mask. It will be the first you have so served.

SCENE XIII.

Lord Touchwood *and* Maskwell.

Lord Touch. Sure I was born to be controlled y those I should command: my very slaves will hortly give me rules how I shall govern them.

Mask. I am concerned to see your lordship disomposed.

Lord Touch. Have you seen my wife lately, or isobliged her?

Mask. No, my lord.—[*Aside.*] What can this ıean?

Lord Touch. Then Mellefont has urged someody to incense her.—Something she has heard f you which carries her beyond the bounds of atience.

Mask. [*Aside.*] This I feared.—[*Aloud.*] Did ot your lordship tell her of the honours you deigned me?

Lord Touch. Yes.

Mask. 'Tis that; you know my lady has a high pirit, she thinks I am unworthy.

Lord Touch. Unworthy! 'tis an ignorant pride ı her to think so:—honesty to me is true nobility. Iowever, 'tis my will it shall be so, and that should e convincing to her as much as reason.—By eaven, I'll not be wife-ridden! were it possible, ; should be done this night.

Mask. [*Aside.*] By heaven he meets my wishes! -[*Aloud.*] Few things are impossible to willing ıinds.

Lord Touch. Instruct me how this may be one, you shall see I want no inclination.

Mask. I had laid a small design for to-morrow as love will be inventing) which I thought to comıunicate to your lordship; but it may be as well one to-night.

Lord Touch. Here's company.—Come this way, nd tell me.

SCENE XIV.

Careless *and* Cynthia.

Care. Is not that he now gone out with my lord?

Cyn. Yes.

Care. By heaven, there's treachery!—The conısion that I saw your father in, my lady Touchrood's passion, with what imperfectly I overheard etween my lord and her, confirm me in my fears. Vhere's Mellefont?

Cyn. Here he comes.

SCENE XV.

Careless, Cynthia, *and* Mellefont.

Cyn. Did Maskwell tell you anything of the haplain's chamber?

Mel. No; my dear, will you get ready?—the hings are all in my chamber; I want nothing but he habit.

Care. You are betrayed, and Maskwell is the illain I always thought him.

Cyn. When you were gone, he said his mind was hanged, and bid me meet him in the chaplain's room, pretending immediately to follow you, and give you notice.

Mel. How!

Care. There's Saygrace tripping by with a bundle under his arm.—He cannot be ignorant that Maskwell means to use his chamber; let's follow and examine him.

Mel. 'Tis loss of time—I cannot think him false.

SCENE XVI.

Cynthia *and* Lord Touchwood.

Cyn. My lord musing! [*Aside.*

Lord Touch. [*Not perceiving* Cynthia.] He has a quick invention, if this were suddenly designed:—yet he says he had prepared my chaplain already.

Cyn. How's this! now I fear indeed. [*Aside.*

Lord Touch. Cynthia here!—Alone, fair cousin, and melancholy?

Cyn. Your lordship was thoughtful.

Lord Touch. My thoughts were on serious business, not worth your hearing.

Cyn. Mine were on treachery concerning you, and may be worth your hearing.

Lord Touch. Treachery concerning me! pray be plain.—Hark! what noise!

Mask. [*Within*] Will you not hear me?

Lady Touch. [*Within.*] No, monster! traitor! no.

Cyn. [*Aside.*] My lady and Maskwell! this may be lucky.—[*Aloud.*] My lord, let me entreat you to stand behind this screen, and listen; perhaps this chance may give you proof of what you ne'er could have believed from my suspicions.

[*They retire behind a screen.*

SCENE XVII.

Lady Touchwood *with a dagger, and* Maskwell.

Lady Touch. You want but leisure to invent fresh falsehood, and soothe me to a fond belief of all your fictions; but I will stab the lie that's forming in your heart, and save a sin, in pity to your soul.

Mask. Strike then!—since you will have it so.

Lady Touch. Ha! A steady villain to the last!

Mask. Come, why do you dally with me thus?

Lady Touch. Thy stubborn temper shocks me, and you knew it would.—This is cunning all, and not courage; no, I know thee well: but thou shalt miss thy aim.

Mask. Ha! ha! ha!

Lady Touch. Ha! do you mock my rage? then this shall punish your fond, rash contempt!—[*Goes to strike.*]—Again smile!—and such a smile as speaks in ambiguity!—Ten thousand meanings lurk in each corner of that various face. O! that they were written in thy heart! that I, with this, might lay thee open to my sight!—But then 'twill be too late to know.—Thou hast, thou hast found the only way to turn my rage; too well thou knowest my jealous soul could never bear uncertainty. Speak then, and tell me.—Yet are you

silent? Oh, I am bewildered in all passions! but thus my anger melts.—[*Weeps.*]—Here, take this poniard, for my very spirits faint, and I want strength to hold it; thou hast disarmed my soul. [*Gives the dagger.*

Lord Touch. [*Aside.*] Amazement shakes me—where will this end?

Mask. So, 'tis well—let your wild fury have a vent; and when you have temper, tell me.

Lady Touch. Now, now, now I am calm, and can hear you.

Mask. [*Aside.*] Thanks, my invention; and now I have it for you.—[*Aloud.*] First tell me what urged you to this violence? for your passion broke in such imperfect terms, that yet I am to learn the cause.

Lady Touch. My lord himself surprised me with the news you were to marry Cynthia:—that you had owned your love to him, and his indulgence would assist you to attain your ends.

Cyn. [*Aside to* Lord TOUCHWOOD.] How, my lord!

Lord Touch. [*Aside to* CYNTHIA.] Pray forbear all resentments for a while, and let us hear the rest.

Mask. I grant you in appearance all is true; I seemed consenting to my lord; nay, transported with the blessing.—But could you think that I, who had been happy in your loved embraces, could e'er be fond of an inferior slavery.

Lord Touch. [*Aside.*] Ha! O poison to my ears! what do I hear!

Cyn. Nay, good my lord, forbear resentment, let us hear it out.

Lord Touch. Yes, I will contain, though I could burst.

Mask. I that had wantoned in the rich circle of your world of love, could I be confined within the puny province of a girl! No—yet though I dote on each last favour more than all the rest; though I would give a limb for every look you cheaply throw away on any other object of your love; yet so far I prize your pleasures o'er my own, that all this seeming plot that I have laid has been to gratify your taste, and cheat the world, to prove a faithful rogue to you.

Lady Touch. If this were true!—but how can it be?

Mask. I have so contrived that Mellefont will presently, in the chaplain's habit, wait for Cynthia in your dressing-room: but I have put the change upon her that she may be otherwhere employed.—Do you procure her night-gown, and, with your hoods tied over your face, meet him in her stead; you may go privately by the back stairs, and, unperceived, there you may propose to reinstate him in his uncle's favour, if he'll comply with your desires; his case is desperate, and I believe he'll yield to any conditions.—If not, here take this; you may employ it better than in the heart of one who is nothing when not yours. [*Gives the dagger.*

Lady Touch. Thou canst deceive everybody,—nay, thou hast deceived me; but 'tis as I would wish.—Trusty villain! I could worship thee!

Mask. No more.—There wants but a few minutes of the time; and Mellefont's love will carry him there before his hour.

Lady Touch. I go, I fly, incomparable Maskwell!

SCENE XVIII.

MASKWELL.

So, this wasa pinch indeed; my invention was upon the rack, and made discovery of her last plot: I hope Cynthia and my chaplain will be ready, I'll prepare for the expedition.

SCENE XIX.

CYNTHIA *and* Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Cyn. Now, my lord.

Lord Touch. Astonishment binds up my rage! Villany upon villany! Heavens, what a long track of dark deceit has this discovered! I am confounded when I look back, and want a clue to guide me through the various mazes of unheard-of treachery. My wife! damnation! my hell!

Cyn. My lord, have patience, and be sensible how great our happiness is that this discovery was not made too late.

Lord Touch. I thank you, yet it may be still too late, if we don't presently prevent the execution of their plots.—Ha, I'll do't. Where's Mellefont, my poor injured nephew?—How shall I make him ample satisfaction?—

Cyn. I dare answer for him.

Lord Touch. I do him fresh wrong to question his forgiveness; for I know him to be all goodness.—Yet my wife! damn her!—She'll think to meet him in that dressing-room;—was't not so? and Maskwell will expect you in the chaplain's chamber.—For once, I'll add my plot too.—Let us haste to find out, and inform my nephew; and do you quickly as you can bring all the company into this gallery.—I'll expose the strumpet and the villain.

SCENE XX.

Lord FROTH *and* Sir PAUL.

Lord Froth. By heavens, I have slept an age!—Sir Paul, what o'clock is't? Past eight, on my conscience! my lady's is the most inviting couch; and a slumber there is the prettiest amusement! But where's all the company?—

Sir Paul. The company, gadsbud, I don't know, my lord, but here's the strangest revolution, all turned topsy-turvy; as I hope for Providence.

Lord Froth. O heavens, what's the matter? where's my wife?

Sir Paul. All turned topsy-turvy, as sure as a gun.

Lord Froth. How do you mean? my wife!

Sir Paul. The strangest posture of affairs!

Lord Froth. What, my wife?

Sir Paul. No, no, I mean the family.—Your lady's affairs may be in a very good posture; I saw her go into the garden with Mr. Brisk.

Lord Froth. How? where? when? what to do?

Sir Paul. I suppose they have been laying their heads together.

Lord Froth. How?

Sir Paul. Nay, only about poetry, I suppose, my lord; making couplets.

Lord Froth. Couplets!

Sir Paul. O, here they come.

SCENE XXI.

Lord FROTH, Sir PAUL, Lady FROTH, *and* BRISK.

Brisk. My lord, your humble servant:—sir Paul, yours.—The finest night!

Lady Froth. My dear, Mr. Brisk and I have been star-gazing, I don't know how long.

Sir Paul. Does it not tire your ladyship; are not you weary with looking up?

Lady Froth. Oh, no, I love it violently.—My dear, you're melancholy.

Lord Froth. No, my dear; I'm but just awake.

Lady Froth. Snuff some of my spirit of hartshorn.

Lord Froth. I've some of my own, thank you, my dear.

Lady Froth. Well, I swear, Mr. Brisk, you understood astronomy like an old Egyptian.

Brisk. Not comparably to your ladyship; you are the very Cynthia of the skies, and queen of stars.

Lady Froth. That's because I have no light but what's by reflection from you, who are the sun.

Brisk. Madam, you have eclipsed me quite, let me perish!—I can't answer that.

Lady Froth. No matter.—Harkee, shall you and I make an almanac together?

Brisk. With all my soul.—Your ladyship has made me the man in't already, I'm so full of the wounds which you have given.

Lady Froth. O finely taken! I swear now you are even with me. O Parnassus! you have an infinite deal of wit.

Sir Paul. So he has, gadsbud, and so has your ladyship.

SCENE XXII.

Lord FROTH, Sir PAUL, Lady FROTH, BRISK, Lady PLYANT, CARELESS, *and* CYNTHIA.

Lady Ply. You tell me most surprising things; bless me, who would ever trust a man! O my heart aches for fear they should be all deceitful alike.

Care. You need not fear, madam, you have charms to fix inconstancy itself.

Lady Ply. O dear, you make me blush!

Lord Froth. Come, my dear, shall we take leave of my lord and lady?

Cyn. They'll wait upon your lordship presently.

Lady Froth. Mr. Brisk, my coach shall set you down. [*A great shriek from the corner of the stage.*

All. What's the matter?

SCENE XXIII.

Lord FROTH, Sir PAUL, Lady FROTH, BRISK, Lady PLYANT, CARELESS, CYNTHIA; Lady TOUCHWOOD *runs out affrighted*, Lord TOUCHWOOD *after her, disguised in a parson's habit.*

Lady Touch. O, I'm betrayed!—Save me! help me!

Lord Touch. Now, what evasion, strumpet?

Lady Touch. Stand off! let me go.

Lord Touch. Go, and thy own infamy pursue thee.—[*Exit* Lady TOUCHWOOD.]—You stare as you were all amazed.—I don't wonder at it—but too soon you'll know mine, and that woman's shame.

SCENE XXIV.

Lord TOUCHWOOD, Lord FROTH, Lady FROTH, Sir PAUL, Lady PLYANT, CYNTHIA, BRISK, CARELESS; MELLEFONT *disguised in a parson's habit, and pulling in* MASKWELL. Servants.

Mel. Nay, by heaven, you shall be seen!—Careless, your hand.—[*To* MASKWELL.] Do you hold down your head? Yes, I am your chaplain; look in the face of your injured friend, thou wonder of all falsehood!

Lord Touch. Are you silent, monster?

Mel. Good heavens! how I believed and loved this man!—Take him hence, for he's a disease to my sight.

Lord Touch. Secure that manifold villain. [Servants *seize him.*

Care. Miracle of ingratitude!

Brisk. This is all very surprising, let me perish!

Lady Froth. You know I told you Saturn looked a little more angry than usual.

Lord Touch. We'll think of punishment at leisure, but let me hasten to do justice, in rewarding virtue and wronged innocence.—Nephew, I hope I have your pardon, and Cynthia's.

Mel. We are your lordship's creatures.

Lord Touch. And be each other's comfort.—Let me join your hands.—Unwearied nights and wishing days attend you both; mutual love, lasting health, and circling joys, tread round each happy year of your long lives.

Let secret villany from hence be warn'd;
Howe'er in private mischiefs are conceived,
Torture and shame attend their open birth;
Like vipers in the womb, base treachery lies,
Still gnawing that whence first it did arise;
No sooner born, but the vile parent dies.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY MRS. MOUNTFORD.

Could poets but foresee how plays would take,
Then they could tell what epilognes to make;
Whether to thank or blame their audience most:
But that late knowledge does much hazard cost:
'Till dice are thrown, there's nothing won nor lost.
So, till the thief has stolen, he cannot know
Whether he shall escape the law or no.
But poets run much greater hazards far,
Than they who stand their trials at the bar,
The law provides a curb for its own fury,
And suffers judges to direct the jury:
But in this court, what difference does appear!
For every one's both judge and jury here;
Nay, and what's worse, an executioner.
All have a right and title to some part,
Each choosing that in which he has most art.
The dreadful men of learning all confound,
Unless the fable's good, and moral sound.
The vizor-masks that are in pit and gallery,
Approve or damn the repartee and raillery.
The lady critics, who are better read,
Inquire if characters are nicely bred;
If the soft things are penn'd and spoke with grace:
They judge of action, too, and time, and place;
In which we do not doubt but they're discerning,
For that's a kind of assignation learning.
Beaux judge of dress; the witlings judge of songs;
The cuckoldom, of ancient right, to cits belongs.
Poor poets thus the favour are denied
Even to make exceptions, when they're tried.
'Tis hard that they must every one admit;
Methinks I see some faces in the pit
Which must of consequence be foes to wit.
You who can judge, to sentence may proceed;
But though he cannot write, let him be freed
At least from their contempt who cannot read.

LOVE FOR LOVE.

A Comedy.

Nudus agris, nudus nummis paternis,
* * * *
Insanire parat certa ratione modoque.—Horat. Lib. ii. Sat. 3.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES, EARL OF DORSET AND MIDDLESEX,

LORD CHAMBERLAIN OF HIS MAJESTY'S HOUSEHOLD, AND KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER, &c.

My Lord,—A young poet is liable to the same vanity and indiscretion with a young lover; and the great man who smiles upon one, and the fine woman who looks kindly upon t'other, are both of them in danger of having the favour published with the first opportunity.

But there may be a different motive, which will a little distinguish the offenders. For though one should have a vanity in ruining another's reputation, yet the other may only have an ambition to advance his own. And I beg leave, my Lord, that I may plead the latter, both as the cause and excuse of this dedication.

Whoever is king, is also the father of his country; and as nobody can dispute your Lordship's monarchy in poetry; so all that are concerned ought to acknowledge your universal patronage; and it is only presuming on the privilege of a loyal subject, that I have ventured to make this my address of thanks to your Lordship; which, at the same time, includes a prayer for your protection.

I am not ignorant of the common form of poetical dedications, which are generally made up of panegyrics, where the authors endeavour to distinguish their patrons by the shining characters they give them above other men. But that, my Lord, is not my business at this time, nor is your Lordship now to be distinguished. I am contented with the honour I do myself in this epistle, without the vanity of attempting to add to or explain your Lordship's character.

I confess it is not without some struggling that I behave myself in this case as I ought; for it is very hard to be pleased with a subject, and yet forbear it. But I choose rather to follow Pliny's precept, than his example, when in his panegyric to the Emperor Trajan he says—"Nec minus considerabo quid aures ejûs pati possint, quam quid virtutibus debeatur."

I hope I may be excused the pedantry of a quotation, when it is so justly applied. Here are some lines in the print (and which your Lordship read before this play was acted) that were omitted on the stage, and particularly one whole scene in the third Act, which not only helps the design forward with less precipitation, but also heightens the ridiculous character of Foresight, which indeed seems to be maimed without it. But I found myself in great danger of a long play, and was glad to help it where I could. Though notwithstanding my care, and the kind reception it had from the town, I could heartily wish it yet shorter; but the number of different characters represented in it would have been too much crowded in less room.

This reflection on prolixity (a fault for which scarce any one beauty will atone) warns me not to be tedious now, and detain your Lordship any longer with the trifles of, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient, and most humble servant,

WILL. CONGREVE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Sir Sampson Legend, *Father to* Valentine *and* Ben.
Valentine, *fallen under his Father's displeasure by his expensive way of living, in love with* Angelica.
Scandal, *his Friend, a free speaker.*
Tattle, *a half-witted Beau, vain of his amours, yet valuing himself for secrecy.*
Ben, Sir Sampson's *younger Son, half home-bred, and half sea-bred, designed to marry* Miss Prue.
Foresight, *an illiterate old fellow, peevish and positive, superstitious, and pretending to understand Astrology, Palmistry, Physiognomy, Omens, Dreams, &c. Uncle to* Angelica.
Jeremy, *Servant to* Valentine.
Trapland, *a Scrivener.*
Buckram, *a Lawyer.*
Snap, *a Bailiff.*

Angelica, *Niece to* Foresight, *of a considerable Fortune in her own hands.*
Mrs. Foresight, *second Wife to* Foresight.
Mrs. Frail, *Sister to* Mrs. Foresight, *a Woman of the Town.*
Miss Prue, *Daughter to* Foresight *by a former Wife, a silly awkward country Girl.*
Nurse *to* Miss Prue.
Jenny, *Maid to* Angelica.

Steward, Sailors, *and* Servants.

SCENE,—London.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN, AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW HOUSE, BY MR. BETTERTON.

The husbandman in vain renews his toil,
To cultivate each year a hungry soil;
And fondly hopes for rich and generous fruit,
When what should feed the tree devours the root;
The unladen boughs, he sees, bode certain dearth,
Unless transplanted to more kindly earth.
So, the poor husbands of the stage, who found
Their labours lost upon ungrateful ground,
This last and only remedy have proved;
And hope new fruit from ancient stocks removed.
Well may they hope, when you so kindly aid,
Well plant a soil which you so rich have made.
As Nature gave the world to man's first age,
So from your bounty we receive this stage;
The freedom man was born to you've restored,
And to our world such plenty you afford,
It seems like Eden, fruitful of its own accord.
But since in Paradise frail flesh gave way,
And when but two were made, both went astray;
Forbear your wonder and the fault forgive,
If in our larger family we grieve
One falling Adam, and one tempted Eve.
We who remain would gratefully repay
What our endeavours can, and bring, this day,
The first-fruit offering of a virgin play.
We hope there's something that may please each taste,
And though of homely fare we make the feast,
Yet you will find variety at least.
There's humour, which for cheerful friends we got,
And for the thinking party there's a plot.
(We've something too, to gratify ill-nature,
(If there be any here,) and that is satire;
Though satire scarce dares grin, 'tis grown so mild,
Or only shows its teeth as if it smiled.
As asses thistles, poets mumble wit,
And dare not bite, for fear of being bit.
They hold their pens, as swords are held by fools,
And are afraid to use their own edge-tools.
Since the Plain Dealer's scenes of manly rage,
Not one has dared to lash this crying age.
This time the poet owns the bold essay,
Yet hopes there's no ill-manners in his play:
And he declares by me, he has design'd
Affront to none, but frankly speaks his mind.
And should the ensuing scenes not chance to hit,
He offers but this one excuse, 'twas writ
Before your late encouragement of wit.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—VALENTINE'S *Lodging.*

VALENTINE *discovered reading*, JEREMY *waiting: several books upon the table.*

Val. Jeremy!

Jer. Sir?

Val. Here, take away; I'll walk a turn, and digest what I have read.

Jer. [*Aside.*] You'll grow devilish fat upon this paper diet. [*Takes away the books.*

Val. And d'ye hear, go you to breakfast.—There's a page doubled down in Epictetus that is a feast for an emperor.

Jer. Was Epictetus a real cook, or did he only write receipts?

Val. Read, read, sirrah! and refine your appetite; learn to live upon instruction; feast your mind, and mortify your flesh; read, and take your nourishment in at your eyes; shut up your mouth, and chew the cud of understanding; so Epictetus advises.

Jer. O Lord! I have heard much of him, when I waited upon a gentleman at Cambridge. Pray what was that Epictetus?

Val. A very rich man—not worth a groat.

Jer. Humph, and so he has made a very fine feast where there is nothing to be eaten?

Val. Yes.

Jer. Sir, you're a gentleman, and probably understand this fine feeding; but if you please, I had rather be at board-wages. Does your Epictetus, or your Seneca here, or any of these poor rich rogues, teach you how to pay your debts without money? Will they shut up the mouths of your creditors? Will Plato be bail for you? or Diogenes, because he understands confinement, and lived in a tub, go to prison for you? 'Slife, sir, what do you mean? to mew yourself up here with three or four musty books, in commendation of starving and poverty?

Val. Why, sirrah, I have no money, you know it; and therefore resolve to rail at all that have; and in that I but follow the examples of the wisest and wittiest men in all ages; these poets and philosophers whom you naturally hate, for just such another reason, because they abound in sense, and you are a fool.

Jer. Ay, sir, I am a fool, I know it; and yet, heaven help me, I'm poor enough to be a wit;—but I was always a fool when I told you what your expenses would bring you to; your coaches and your liveries, your treats and your balls; your being in love with a lady that did not care a farthing for you in your prosperity; and keeping company with wits that cared for nothing but your prosperity, and now, when you are poor, hate you as much as they do one another.

Val. Well, and now I am poor I have an opportunity to be revenged on 'em all; I'll pursue Angelica with more love than ever, and appear more notoriously her admirer in this restraint, than when I openly rivalled the rich fops that made court to her; so shall my poverty be a mortification to her pride, and perhaps make her compassionate

the love, which has principally reduced me to this lowness of fortune. And for the wits, I'm sure I am in a condition to be even with them.

Jer. Nay, your condition is pretty even with theirs, that's the truth on't.

Val. I'll take some of their trade out of their hands.

Jer. Now heaven, of mercy, continue the tax upon paper! you don't mean to write!

Val. Yes, I do; I'll write a play.

Jer. Hem!—Sir, if you please to give me a small certificate of three lines;—only to certify those whom it may concern, that the bearer hereof, Jeremy Fetch by name, has for the space of seven years, truly and faithfully served Valentine Legend, Esq.; and that he is not now turned away for any misdemeanour, but does voluntarily dismiss his master from any future authority over him.

Val. No, sirrah, you shall live with me still.

Jer. Sir, it's impossible:—I may die with you, starve with you, or be damned with your works; but to live, even three days, the life of a play, I no more expect it, than to be canonised for a Muse after my decease.

Val. You are witty, you rogue! I shall want your help; I'll have you learn to make couplets, to tag the ends of acts; d'ye hear, get the maids to crambo in an evening, and learn the knack of rhyming: you may arrive at the height of a song sent by an unknown hand, or a chocolate-house lampoon.

Jer. But, sir, is this the way to recover your father's favour? why, sir Sampson will be irreconcilable. If your younger brother should come from sea, he'd never look upon you again. You're undone, sir, you're ruined, you won't have a friend left in the world if you turn poet.—Ah, pox confound that Will's Coffee-house! it has ruined more young men than the Royal Oak lottery;—nothing thrives that belongs to't. The man of the house would have been an alderman by this time with half the trade, if he had set up in the city. For my part, I never sit at the door that I don't get double the stomach that I do at a horse-race:—the air upon Banstead downs is nothing to it for a whetter. Yet I never see it, but the spirit of famine appears to me, sometimes like a decayed porter, worn out with pimping, and carrying billets-doux and songs; not like other porters for hire, but for the jest's sake:—now like a thin chairman, melted down to half his proportion with carrying a poet upon tick, to visit some great fortune, and his fare to be paid him, like the wages of sin, either at the day of marriage, or the day of death.

Val. Very well, sir; can you proceed?

Jer. Sometimes like a bilked bookseller, with a meagre terrified countenance, that looks as if he had written for himself, or were resolved to turn author, and bring the rest of his brethren into the same condition:—and lastly, in the form of a worn-out punk, with verses in her hand, which her vanity had preferred to settlements, without a whole tatter to her tail, but as ragged as one of the Muses; or as if she were carrying her linen to the paper-mill, to be converted into folio books, of warning to all young maids, not to prefer poetry to good sense, or lying in the arms of a needy wit, before the embraces of a wealthy fool.

SCENE II.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, *and* JEREMY.

Scan. What, Jeremy holding forth?

Val. The rogue has (with all the wit he could muster up) been declaiming against wit.

Scan. Ay? why then I'm afraid Jeremy has wit: for wherever it is, it's always contriving its own ruin.

Jer. Why, so I have been telling my master, sir; Mr. Scandal, for heaven's sake, sir, try if you can dissuade him from turning poet.

Scan. Poet! he shall turn soldier first, and rather depend upon the outside of his head, than the lining. Why, what the devil! has not your poverty made you enemies enough? must you needs show your wit to get more?

Jer. Ay, more indeed; for who cares for anybody that has more wit than himself?

Scan. Jeremy speaks like an oracle. Don't you see how worthless great men, and dull rich rogues, avoid a witty man of small fortune? Why, he looks like a writ of inquiry into their titles and estates; and seems commissioned by heaven to seize the better half.

Val. Therefore I would rail in my writings, and be revenged.

Scan. Rail? at whom? the whole world? Impotent and vain! who would die a martyr to sense in a country where the religion is folly? you may stand at bay for a while; but when the full cry is against you, you shan't have fair play for your life. If you can't be fairly run down by the hounds, you will be treacherously shot by the huntsmen. No, turn pimp, flatterer, quack, lawyer, parson, be chaplain to an atheist, or stallion to an old woman, anything but poet; a modern poet is worse, more servile, timorous and fawning, than any I have named: without you could retrieve the ancient honours of the name, recal the stage of Athens, and be allowed the force of open, honest satire.

Val. You are as inveterate against our poets as if your character had been lately exposed upon the stage.—Nay, I am not violently bent upon the trade.—[*Knocking at the door.*] Jeremy, see who's there.—[*Exit* JEREMY.] But tell me what you would have me do? What does the world say of me, and my forced confinement?

Scan. The world behaves itself as it uses to do on such occasions; some pity you and condemn your father; others excuse him and blame you; only the ladies are merciful, and wish you well; since love and pleasurable expense have been your greatest faults.

Re-enter JEREMY.

Val. How now?

Jer. Nothing, new, sir; I have despatched some half-a-dozen duns with as much dexterity as a hungry judge does causes at dinner time.

Val. What answer have you given 'em?

Scan. Patience, I suppose? the old receipt.

Jer. No, faith, sir; I have put 'em off so long with patience and forbearance, and other fair words, that I was forced now to tell 'em in plain downright English—

Val. What?

Jer. That they should be paid.

Val. When?

Jer. To-morrow.

Val. And how the devil do you mean to keep your word?

Jer. Keep it! not at all; it has been so very much stretched that I reckon it will break of course by to-morrow, and nobody be surprised at the matter.—[*Knocking.*] Again!—Sir, if you don't like my negotiation, will you be pleased to answer these yourself?

Val. See who they are.

SCENE III.

VALENTINE *and* SCANDAL.

Val. By this, Scandal, you may see what it is to be great; secretaries of state, presidents of the council, and generals of an army, lead just such a life as I do; have just such crowds of visitants in a morning, all soliciting of past promises; which are but a civiler sort of duns, that lay claim to voluntary debts.

Scan. And you, like a true great man, having engaged their attendance, and promised more than ever you intend to perform, are more perplexed to find evasions than you would be to invent the honest means of keeping your word, and gratifying your creditors.

Val. Scandal, learn to spare your friends, and do not provoke your enemies: this liberty of your tongue will one day bring a confinement on your body, my friend.

SCENE IV.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, *and* JEREMY.

Jer. O sir, there's Trapland the scrivener, with two suspicious fellows like lawful pads, that would knock a man down with pocket-tipstaves;—and there's your father's steward, and the nurse with one of your children from Twitnam.

Val. Pox on her! could she find no other time to fling my sins in my face? Here, give her this, [*Gives money*] and bid her trouble me no more;—a thoughtless, two-handed whore! she knows my condition well enough, and might have overlaid the child a fortnight ago, if she had had any forecast in her.

Scan. What, is it bouncing Margery with my godson?

Jer. Yes, sir.

Scan. My blessing to the boy, with this token of my love.—[*Gives money.*] And, d'ye hear, bid Margery put more flocks in her bed, shift twice a-week, and not work so hard, that she may not smell so vigorously. I shall take the air shortly.

Val. Scandal, don't spoil my boy's milk.—[*To* JEREMY.] Bid Trapland come in. [*Exit* JEREMY.] If I can give that Cerberus a sop, I shall be at rest for one day.

SCENE V.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, TRAPLAND, *and* JEREMY.

Val. O Mr. Trapland, my old friend, welcome!—Jeremy, a chair quickly; a bottle of sack and a toast;—fly—a chair first.

Trap. A good morning to you, Mr. Valentine, and to you, Mr. Scandal.

Scan. The morning's a very good morning, if you don't spoil it.

Val. Come sit you down, you know his way.

Trap. [*Sits.*] There is a debt, Mr. Valentine, of fifteen hundred pounds of pretty long standing—

Val. I cannot talk about business with a thirsty palate.—[*To* JEREMY.] Sirrah, the sack.

Trap. And I desire to know what course you have taken for the payment?

Val. Faith and troth, I am heartily glad to see you:—my service to you. [*Drinks.*] Fill, fill, to honest Mr. Trapland, fuller.

Trap. Hold, sweetheart;—this is not to our business. My service to you, Mr. Scandal. [*Drinks.*] I have forborne as long—

Val. T'other glass, and then we'll talk.—Fill, Jeremy.

Trap. No more, in truth.—I have forborne, I say—

Val. [*To* JEREMY.] Sirrah, fill when I bid you.—[*To* TRAPLAND.] And how does your handsome daughter? Come, a good husband to her. [*Drinks.*

Trap. Thank you.—I have been out of this money—

Val. Drink first.—Scandal, why do you not drink? [*They drink.*

Trap. And in short, I can be put off no longer.

Val. I was much obliged to you for your supply: it did me signal service in my necessity. But you delight in doing good.—Scandal, drink to me my friend Trapland's health. An honester man lives not, nor one more ready to serve his friend in distress, though I say it to his face. Come, fill each man his glass.

Scan. What, I know Trapland has been a whoremaster, and loves a wench still. You never knew a whoremaster that was not an honest fellow.

Trap. Fy, Mr. Scandal! you never knew—

Scan. What, don't I know?—I know the buxom black widow in the Poultry—eight hundred pounds a-year, jointure, and twenty thousand pounds in money. Aha, old Trap!

Val. Say you so, i'faith? come, we'll remember the widow: I know whereabouts you are; come, to the widow—

Trap. No more, indeed.

Val. What, the widow's health.—[*To* JEREMY.] Give it him.—Off with it. [*They drink.*] A lovely girl, i'faith, black sparkling eyes, soft pouting ruby lips; better sealing there than a bond for a million, ha!

Trap. No, no, there's no such thing, we'd better mind our business;—you're a wag.

Val. No, faith, we'll mind the widow's business; fill again.—Pretty round heaving breasts, a Barbary shape, and a jut with her bum would stir an anchorite, and the prettiest foot! Oh, if a man could but fasten his eyes to her feet, as they steal in and out, and play at bo-peep under her petticoats! ah, Mr. Trapland?

Trap. Verily, give me a glass—you're a wag—and here's to the widow. [*Drinks.*

Scan. [*Aside to* VALENTINE.] He begins to chuckle; ply him close, or he'll relapse into a dun.

SCENE VI.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, JEREMY, TRAPLAND, *and* SNAP.

Snap. By your leave, gentlemen.—Mr. Trapland, if we must do our office, tell us: we have half-a-dozen gentlemen to arrest in Pall-mall and Covent-garden; and if we don't make haste, the chairmen will be abroad, and block up the chocolate-houses, and then our labour's lost.

Trap. Udso, that's true.—Mr. Valentine, I love mirth, but business must be done; are you ready to—

Jer. Sir, your father's steward says he comes to make proposals concerning your debts.

Val. Bid him come in.—Mr. Trapland, send away your officer; you shall have an answer presently.

Trap. Mr. Snap, stay within call.

SCENE VII.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, TRAPLAND, JEREMY, *and* Steward, *who whispers* VALENTINE.

Scan. Here's a dog now, a traitor in his wine; —sirrah, refund the sack.—Jeremy, fetch him some warm water, or I'll rip up his stomach, and go the shortest way to his conscience.

Trap. Mr. Scandal, you are uncivil; I did not value your sack; but you cannot expect it again, when I have drunk it.

Scan. And how do you expect to have your money again, when a gentleman has spent it?

Val. [*To* Steward.] You need say no more, I understand the conditions, they are very hard, but my necessity is very pressing; I agree to 'em. Take Mr. Trapland with you, and let him draw the writing.—Mr. Trapland, you know this man, he shall satisfy you.

Trap. Sincerely, I am loath to be thus pressing, but my necessity—

Val. No apology, good Mr. Scrivener, you shall be paid.

Trap. I hope you forgive me, my business requires—

SCENE VIII.

VALENTINE *and* SCANDAL.

Scan. He begs pardon like a hangman at an execution.

Val. But I have got a reprieve.

Scan. I am surprised; what, does your father relent?

Val. No; he has sent me the hardest conditions in the world. You have heard of a booby brother of mine that was sent to sea three years ago? this brother my father hears is landed; whereupon he very affectionately sends me word, if I will make a deed of conveyance of my right to his estate after his death to my younger brother, he will immediately furnish me with four thousand pounds to pay my debts, and make my fortune. This was once proposed before, and I refused it; but the present impatience of my creditors for their money, and my own impatience of confinement, and absence from Angelica, force me to consent.

Scan. A very desperate demonstration of your love to Angelica; and I think she has never given you any assurance of hers.

Val. You know her temper, she never gave me any great reason either for hope or despair.

Scan. Women of her airy temper, as they seldom think before they act, so they rarely give us any light to guess at what they mean; but you have little reason to believe that a woman of this age, who has had an indifference for you in your prosperity, will fall in love with your ill-fortune; besides, Angelica has a great fortune of her own; and great fortunes either expect another great fortune, or a fool.

SCENE IX.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, *and* JEREMY.

Jer. More misfortune's, sir.

Val. What, another dun?

Jer. No, sir, but Mr. Tattle is come to wait upon you.

Val. Well, I can't help it;—you must bring him up; he knows I don't go abroad.

SCENE X.

VALENTINE *and* SCANDAL.

Scan. Pox on him! I'll be gone.

Val. No, prithee stay: Tattle and you should never be asunder; you are light and shadow, and show one another; he is perfectly thy reverse both in humour and understanding; and, as you set up for defamation, he is a mender of reputations.

Scan. A mender of reputations! ay, just as he is a keeper of secrets, another virtue that he sets up for in the same manner. For the rogue will speak aloud in the posture of a whisper; and deny a woman's name, while he gives you the marks of her person: he will forswear receiving a letter from her, and at the same time show you her hand in the superscription; and yet perhaps he has counterfeited the hand too, and sworn to a truth; but he hopes not to be believed; and refuses the reputation of a lady's favour, as a doctor says *No* to a bishopric, only that it may be granted him.—In short, he is a public professor of secrecy, and makes proclamation that he holds private intelligence.—He's here.

SCENE XI.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, *and* TATTLE.

Tat. Valentine, good morrow; Scandal, I am yours,—that is, when you speak well of me.

Scan. That is, when I am yours; for while I am my own, or anybody's else, that will never happen.

Tat. How inhuman!

Val. Why, Tattle, you need not be much concerned at anything that he says: for to converse with Scandal, is to play at Losing Loadum; you must lose a good name to him, before you can win it for yourself.

Tat. But how barbarous that is, and how unfortunate for him, that the world should think the better of any person for his calumniation!—I thank heaven, it has always been a part of my character to handle the reputation of others very tenderly indeed.

Scan. Ay, such rotten reputations as you have to deal with, are to be handled tenderly indeed.

Tat. Nay, but why rotten? why should you say rotten, when you know not the persons of whom you speak? how cruel that is!

Scan. Not know 'em? why, thou never hadst to do with anybody that did not stink to all the town.

Tat. Ha! ha! ha! nay, now you make a jest of it indeed; for there is nothing more known, than that nobody knows anything of that nature of me.—As I hope to be saved, Valentine, I never exposed a woman since I knew what woman was.

Val. And yet you have conversed with several.

Tat. To be free with you, I have;—I don't care if I own that;—nay more (I'm going to say a bold word now), I never could meddle with a woman that had to do with anybody else.

Scan. How!

Val. Nay, faith, I'm apt to believe him.—Except her husband, Tattle.

Tat. Oh, that—

Scan. What think you of that noble commoner Mrs. Drab?

Tat. Pooh, I know Madam Drab has made her brags in three or four places, that I said this and that, and writ to her, and did I know not what;—but upon my reputation she did me wrong.—Well, well, that was malice:—but I know the bottom of it. She was bribed to that by one we all know;—a man too—only to bring me into disgrace with a certain woman of quality—

Scan. Whom we all know.

Tat. No matter for that.—Yes, yes, everybody knows—no doubt on't, everybody knows my secrets.—But I soon satisfied the lady of my innocence; for I told her—Madam, says I, there are some persons who make it their business to tell stories, and say this and that of one and t'other, and everything in the world; and, says I, if your grace—

Scan. Grace!

Tat. O Lord! what have I said? my unlucky tongue!

Val. Ha! ha! ha!

Scan. Why, Tattle, thou hast more impudence than one can in reason expect: I shall have an esteem for thee. Well, and ha! ha! ha! well, go on: and what did you say to her grace?

Val. I confess this is something extraordinary.

Tat. Not a word, as I hope to be saved; an arrant *lapsus linguæ*.—Come, let's talk of something else.

Val. Well, but how did you acquit yourself?

Tat. Pooh! pooh! nothing at all, I only rallied with you—a woman of ordinary rank was a little jealous of me, and I told her something or other, faith—I know not what.—Come, let's talk of something else. [*Hums a song.*

Scan. Hang him, let him alone, he has a mind we should inquire.

Tat. Valentine, I supped last night with your mistress, and her uncle old Foresight; I think your father lies at Foresight's.

Val. Yes.

Tat. Upon my soul, Angelica's a fine woman.—And so is Mrs. Foresight, and her sister Mrs. Frail.

Scan. Yes, Mrs. Frail is a very fine woman; we all know her.

Tat. Oh, that is not fair!

Scan. What?

Tat. To tell.

Scan. To tell what? why, what do you know of Mrs. Frail?

Tat. Who, I? upon honour I don't know whether she be man or woman; but, by the smoothness of her chin, and roundness of her hips.

Scan. No!

Tat. No.

Scan. She says otherwise.

Tat. Impossible!

Scan. Yes, faith. Ask Valentine else.

Tat. Why then, as I hope to be saved, I believe a woman only obliges a man to secrecy, that she may have the pleasure of telling herself.

Scan. No doubt on't. Well, but has she done you wrong, or no? you have had her? ha?

Tat. Though I have more honour than to tell first, I have more manners than to contradict what a lady has declared.

Scan. Well, you own it?

Tat. I am strangely surprised!—Yes, yes, I can't deny't, if she taxes me with it.

Scan. She'll be here by-and-by, she sees Valentine every morning.

Tat. How?

Val. She does me the favour, I mean, of a visit sometimes. I did not think she had granted more to anybody.

Scan. Nor I, faith; but Tattle does not use to belie a lady; it is contrary to his character.—How one may be deceived in a woman, Valentine!

Tat. Nay, what do you mean, gentlemen?

Scan. I'm resolved I'll ask her.

Tat. O barbarous! why, did you not tell me—

Scan. No, you told us.

Tat. And bid me ask Valentine?

Val. What did I say? I hope you won't bring me to confess an answer, when you never asked me the question?

Tat. But, gentlemen, this is the most inhuman proceeding—

Val. Nay, if you have known Scandal thus long, and cannot avoid such a palpable decoy as this was, the ladies have a fine time whose reputations are in your keeping.

SCENE XII.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, TATTLE, *and* JEREMY.

Jer. Sir, Mrs. Frail has sent to know if you are stirring.

Val. Show her up when she comes.

SCENE XIII.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, *and* TATTLE.

Tat. I'll be gone.

Val. You'll meet her.

Tat. Is there not a back way?

Val. If there were, you have more discretion than to give Scandal such an advantage; why, your running away will prove all that he can tell her.

Tat. Scandal, you will not be so ungenerous?—Oh, I shall lose my reputation of secrecy for ever!—I shall never be received but upon public days; and my visits will never be admitted beyond a drawing-room: I shall never see a bedchamber again, never be locked in a closet, nor run behind a screen, or under a table; never be distinguished among the waiting-women by the name of trusty Mr. Tattle more.—You will not be so cruel.

Val. Scandal, have pity on him; he'll yield to any conditions.

Tat. Any, any terms.

Scan. Come, then, sacrifice half-a-dozen women of good reputation to me presently.—Come, where are you familiar?—and see that they are women of quality too, the first quality.

Tat. 'Tis very hard.—Won't a baronet's lady pass?

Scan. No, nothing under a right honourable.

Tat. O inhuman! you don't expect their names?

Scan. No, their titles shall serve.

Tat. Alas! that's the same thing: pray spare me their titles; I'll describe their persons.

Scan. Well, begin then: but take notice, if you are so ill a painter, that I cannot know the person by your picture of her, you must be condemned, like other bad painters, to write the name at the bottom.

Tat. Well, first then—

SCENE XIV.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, TATTLE, *and* MRS. FRAIL.

Tat. O unfortunate! she's come already; will you have patience till another time;—I'll double the number.

Scan. Well, on that condition.—Take heed you don't fail me.

Frail. I shall get a fine reputation by coming to see fellows in a morning.—Scandal, you devil, are you here too?—Oh, Mr. Tattle, everything is safe with you, we know.

Scan. Tattle!

Tat. Mum.—O madam, you do me too much honour.

Val. Well, lady galloper, how does Angelica?

Frail. Angelica? manners!

Val. What, you will allow an absent lover—

Frail. No, I'll allow a lover present with his mistress to be particular;—but otherwise I think his passion ought to give place to his manners.

Val. But what if he has more passion than manners?

Frail. Then let him marry and reform.

Val. Marriage indeed may qualify the fury of his passion, but it very rarely mends a man's manners.

Frail. You are the most mistaken in the world; there is no creature perfectly civil but a husband. For in a little time he grows only rude to his wife, and that is the highest good breeding, for it begets his civility to other people.—Well, I'll tell you news; but I suppose you hear your brother Benjamin is landed. And my brother Foresight's daughter is come out of the country—I assure you there's a match talked of by the old people.—Well, if he be but as great a sea-beast as she is a land-monster, we shall have a most amphibious breed.—The progeny will be all otters; he has been bred at sea, and she has never been out of the country.

Val. Pox take 'em! their conjunction bodes me no good, I'm sure.

Frail. Now you talk of conjunction, my brother Foresight has cast both their nativities, and prognosticates an admiral and an eminent justice of the peace to be the issue male of their two bodies.—'Tis the most superstitious old fool! he would have persuaded me, that this was an unlucky day, and would not let me come abroad; but I invented a dream, and sent him to Artemidorus for interpretation, and so stole out to see you. Well, and what will you give me now? come, I must have something.

Val. Step into the next room—and I'll give you something.

Scan. Ay, we'll all give you something.

Frail. Well, what will you all give me?

Val. Mine's a secret.

Frail. I thought you would give me something that would be a trouble to you to keep.

Val. And Scandal shall give you a good name.

Frail. That's more than he has for himself.—And what will you give me, Mr. Tattle?

Tat. I? my soul, madam.

Frail. Pooh, no, I thank you, I have enough to do to take care of my own. Well; but I'll come and see you one of these mornings: I hear you have a great many pictures.

Tat. I have a pretty good collection at your service, some originals.

Scan. Hang him, he has nothing but the Seasons and the Twelve Cæsars, paltry copies; and the Five Senses, as ill represented as they are in himself; and he himself is the only original you will see there.

Frail. Ay, but I hear he has a closet of beauties.

Scan. Yes, all that have done him favours, if you will believe him.

Frail. Ay, let me see those, Mr. Tattle.

Tat. Oh, madam, those are sacred to love and contemplation. No man but the painter and myself was ever blest with the sight.

Frail. Well, but a woman—

Tat. Nor woman, 'till she consented to have her picture there too;—for then she's obliged to keep the secret.

Scan. No, no; come to me if you'd see pictures.

Frail. You?

Scan. Yes, faith, I can show you your own picture, and most of your acquaintance to the life, and as like as at Kneller's.

Frail. O lying creature!—Valentine, does not he lie?—I can't believe a word he says.

Val. No, indeed, he speaks truth now; for as Tattle has pictures of all that have granted him favours, he has the pictures of all that have refused him; if satires, descriptions, characters, and lampoons are pictures.

Scan. Yes, mine are most in black and white;—and yet there are some set out in their true colours, both men and women. I can show you pride, folly, affectation, wantonness, inconstancy, covetousness, dissimulation, malice, and ignorance, all in one piece. Then I can show you lying,

foppery, vanity, cowardice, bragging, lechery, impotence and ugliness in another piece; and yet one of these is a celebrated beauty, and t'other a professed beau. I have paintings too, some pleasant enough.

Frail. Come, let's hear 'em.

Scan. Why, I have a beau in a bagnio, cupping for a complexion, and sweating for a shape.

Frail. So.

Scan. Then I have a lady burning brandy in a cellar with a hackney coachman.

Frail. O devil! Well, but that story is not true.

Scan. I have some hieroglyphics too; I have a lawyer with a hundred hands, two heads, and but one face; a divine with two faces, and one head; and I have a soldier with his brains in his belly, and his heart where his head should be.

Frail. And no head?

Scan. No head.

Frail. Pooh, this is all invention. Have you ne'er a poet?

Scan. Yes, I have a poet weighing words, and selling praise for praise, and a critic picking his pocket. I have another large piece too, representing a school; where there are huge-proportioned critics, with long wigs, laced coats, Steenkirk cravats, and terrible faces; with catcalls in their hands, and horn-books about their necks. I have many more of this kind, very well painted as you shall see.

Frail. Well, I'll come, if it be but to disprove you.

SCENE XV.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, TATTLE, MRS. FRAIL, *and* JEREMY.

Jer. Sir, here's the steward again from your father.

Val. I'll come to him.—Will you give me leave? I'll wait on you again presently.

Frail. No, I'll be gone. Come, who squires me to the Exchange? I must call my sister Foresight there.

Scan. I will: I have a mind to your sister.

Frail. Civil!

Tat. I will, because I have a *tendre* for your ladyship.

Frail. That's somewhat the better reason, to my opinion.

Scan. Well, if Tattle entertains you, I have the better opportunity to engage your sister.

Val. Tell Angelica, I am about making hard conditions to come abroad, and be at liberty to see her.

Scan. I'll give an account of you and your proceedings. If indiscretion be a sign of love, you are the most a lover of anybody that I know: you fancy that parting with your estate will help you to your mistress.—In my mind he is a thoughtless adventurer,

Who hopes to purchase wealth by selling land,
Or win a mistress with a losing hand. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* FORESIGHT'S *House.*

FORESIGHT *and* Servant.

Fore. Heyday! what are all the women of my family abroad? Is not my wife come home, nor my sister, nor my daughter?

Ser. No, sir.

Fore. Mercy on us, what can be the meaning of it? sure the moon is in all her fortitudes. Is my niece Angelica at home?

Ser. Yes, sir.

Fore. I believe you lie, sir.

Ser. Sir?

Fore. I say you lie, sir. It is impossible that anything should be as I would have it; for I was born, sir, when the Crab was ascending, and all my affairs go backward.

Ser. I can't tell, indeed, sir.

Fore. No, I know you can't, sir; but I can tell, sir, and foretell, sir.

SCENE II.

FORESIGHT, Servant, *and* Nurse.

Fore. Nurse, where's your young mistress?

Nurse. Wee'st heart, I know not, they're none of 'em come home yet. Poor child! I warrant she's fond o' seeing the town;—marry, pray heaven, they ha' given her any dinner.—Good lack-a-day, ha! ha! ha! O strange! I'll vow and swear now,—ha! ha! ha! marry, and did you ever see the like!

Fore. Why, how now, what's the matter?

Nurse. Pray heaven send your worship good luck! marry and amen with all my heart; for you have put on one stocking with the wrong side outward.

Fore. Ha, how? faith and troth I'm glad of it!—And so I have; that may be good luck in troth, in troth it may, very good luck: nay, I have had some omens: I got out of bed backwards too this morning, without premeditation; pretty good that too; but then I stumbled coming down stairs, and met a weasel; bad omens those: some bad, some good, our lives are chequered: mirth and sorrow, want and plenty, night and day, make up our time.—But in troth I am pleased at my stocking; very well pleased at my stocking.—Oh, here's my niece!—Sirrah, go tell sir Sampson Legend I'll wait on him if he's at leisure;—'tis now three o'clock, a very good hour for business. Mercury governs this hour.

SCENE III.

ANGELICA, FORESIGHT, *and* Nurse.

Ang. Is it not a good hour for pleasure too, uncle? pray lend me your coach, mine's out of order.

Fore. What, would you be gadding too? sure all females are mad to-day.—It is of evil portent, and bodes mischief to the master of a family.—I remember an old prophecy written by Messahalah the Arabian, and thus translated by a reverend Buckinghamshire bard.

"When housewifes all the house forsake,
And leave goodman to brew and bake,
Withouten guile then be it said,
That house doth stond upon its head;
And when the head is set in grond,
Ne marl if it be fruitful fond."

Fruitful, the head fruitful;—that bodes horns; the fruit of the head is horns.—Dear niece, stay at home; for by the head of the house is meant the husband; the prophecy needs no explanation.

Ang. Well, but I can neither make you a cuckold, uncle, by going abroad; nor secure you from being one, by staying at home.

Fore. Yes, yes; while there's one woman left, the prophecy is not in full force.

Ang. But my inclinations are in force; I have a mind to go abroad; and if you won't lend me your coach, I'll take a hackney, or a chair, and leave you to erect a scheme, and find who's in conjunction with your wife. Why don't you keep her at home, if you're jealous of her when she's abroad? You know my aunt is a little retrograde (as you call it) in her nature. Uncle, I'm afraid you are not lord of the ascendant, ha! ha! ha!

Fore. Well, Jill-flirt, you are very pert—and always ridiculing that celestial science.

Ang. Nay, uncle, don't be angry;—if you are, I'll rip up all your false prophecies, ridiculous dreams, and idle divinations: I'll swear you are a nuisance to the neighbourhood.—What a bustle did you keep against the last invisible eclipse, laying in provision, as 'twere for a siege! What a world of fire and candle, matches and tinder-boxes did you purchase! One would have thought we were ever after to live under ground, or at least making a voyage to Greenland, to inhabit there all the dark season.

Fore. Why, you malapert slut!

Ang. Will you lend me your coach, or I'll go on?—Nay, I'll declare how you prophesied popery was coming, only because the butler had mislaid some of the apostle spoons, and thought they were lost. Away went religion and spoonmeat together.—Indeed, uncle, I'll indict you for a wizard.

Fore. How, hussy! was there ever such a provoking minx!

Nurse. O merciful father, how she talks!

Ang. Yes, I can make oath of your unlawful midnight practices; you and the old nurse there—

Nurse. Marry, heaven defend!—I at midnight practices!—O Lord, what's here to do!—I in unlawful doings with my master's worship!—Why, did you ever hear the like now?—Sir, did ever I do anything of your midnight concerns—but warm your bed, and tuck you up, and set the candle and your tobacco-box and your urinal by you, and now and then rub the soles of your feet?—O Lord, I?—

Ang. Yes, I saw you together, through the key-hole of the closet, one night, like Saul and the witch of Endor, turning the sieve and shears, and pricking your thumbs, to write poor innocent servants' names in blood, about a little nutmeg-grater, which she had forgot in the caudle-cup.—Nay, I know something worse, if I would speak of it.

Fore. I defy you, hussy! but I'll remember this, I'll be revenged on you, cockatrice; I'll hamper you.—You have your fortune in your own hands,—but I'll find a way to make your lover, your prodigal spendthrift gallant, Valentine, pay for all, I will.

Ang. Will you? I care not, but all shall out then.—Look to't, nurse; I can bring witness that you have a great unnatural teat under your left arm, and he another; and that you suckle a young devil in the shape of a tabby-cat, by turns, I can.

Nurse. A teat! a teat! I an unnatural teat! O the false slanderous thing; feel, feel here, if I have anything but like another Christian. [*Crying.*

Fore. I will have patience, since it is the will of the stars I should be thus tormented.—This is the effect of the malicious conjunctions and oppositions in the third house of my nativity; there the curse of kindred was foretold.—But I will have my doors locked up—I'll punish you, not a man shall enter my house.

Ang. Do, uncle, lock 'em up quickly before my aunt comes home;—you'll have a letter for alimony to-morrow morning.—But let me be gone first, and then let no mankind come near the house, but converse with spirits and the celestial signs, the Bull, and the Ram, and the Goat. Bless me! there are a great many horned beasts among the Twelve Signs, uncle;—but cuckolds go to heaven.

Fore. But there's but one virgin among the twelve signs, spitfire, but one virgin.

Ang. Nor there had not been that one, if she had had to do with anything but astrologers, uncle. That makes my aunt go abroad.

Fore. How? how? is that the reason? Come, you know something: tell me, and I'll forgive you; do, good niece.—Come, you shall have my coach and horses;—faith and troth, you shall.—Does my wife complain? come, I know women tell one another.—She is young and sanguine, has a wanton hazel eye, and was born under Gemini, which may incline her to society; she has a mole upon her lip, with a moist palm, and an open liberality on the mount of Venus.

Ang. Ha! ha! ha!

Fore. Do you laugh?—Well, gentlewoman, I'll—but come, be a good girl, don't perplex your poor uncle, tell me; wont you speak?—Odd, I'll—

SCENE IV.

Angelica, Foresight, Nurse, *and* Servant.

Serv. Sir Sampson is coming down to wait upon you.

Ang. Good b'w'ye, uncle.—Call me a chair.—[*Exit* Servant.] I'll find out my aunt, and tell her, she must not come home. [*Exit.*

Fore. I'm so perplexed and vexed, I am not fit to receive him; I shall scarce recover myself before the hour be past.—Go, nurse, tell sir Sampson I'm ready to wait on him.

Nurse. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Fore. Well—why, if I was born to be a cuckold, there's no more to be said—he's here already.

SCENE V.

FORESIGHT *and* SIR SAMPSON *with a paper.*

Sir Samp. Nor no more to be done, old boy; that's plain.—Here 'tis, I have it in my hand, old Ptolomee; I'll make the ungracious prodigal know who begat him; I will, old Nostrodamus. What, I warrant my son thought nothing belonged to a father but forgiveness and affection; no authority, no correction, no arbitrary power; nothing to be done, but for him to offend, and me to pardon. I warrant you, if he danced till doomsday, he thought I was to pay the piper. Well, but here it is under black and white, *signatum, sigillatum,* and *deliberatum;* that as soon as my son Benjamin is arrived, he is to make over to him his right of inheritance. Where's my daughter that is to be—ha! old Merlin! body o'me, I'm so glad I'm revenged on this undutiful rogue.

Fore. Odso, let me see; let me see the paper.—Ay, faith and troth, here 'tis, if it will but hold. I wish things were done, and the conveyance made. When was this signed, what hour? Odso, you should have consulted me for the time. Well, but we'll make haste.

Sir Samp. Haste, ay, ay; haste enough, my son Ben will be in town to night.—I have ordered my lawyer to draw up writings of settlement and jointure:—all shall be done to-night. No matter for the time: prithee, brother Foresight, leave superstition. Pox o'th' time! there's no time but the time present, there's no more to be said of what's past, and all that is to come will happen. If the sun shine by day, and the stars by night, why, we shall know one another's faces without the help of a candle, and that's all the stars are good for.

Fore. How, how, Sir Sampson? that all? Give me leave to contradict you, and tell you, you are ignorant.

Sir Samp. I tell you I am wise; and *sapiens dominabitur astris;* there's Latin for you to prove it, and an argument to confound your ephemeris.—Ignorant!—I tell you, I have travelled, old Fircu, and know the globe. I have seen the antipodes, where the sun rises at midnight, and sets at noon-day.

Fore. But I tell you, I have travelled, and travelled in the celestial spheres, know the signs and the planets, and their houses. Can judge of motions direct and retrograde, of sextiles, quadrates, trines and oppositions, fiery trigons and aquatical trigons. Know whether life shall be long or short, happy or unhappy, whether diseases are curable or incurable. If journeys shall be prosperous, undertakings successful; or goods stolen recovered, I know—

Sir Samp. I know the length of the emperor of China's foot; have kissed the Great Mogul's slipper, and rid a hunting upon an elephant with the Cham of Tartary.—Body o'me, I have made a cuckold of a king, and the present majesty of Bantam is the issue of these loins.

Fore. I know when travellers lie or speak truth, when they don't know it themselves.

Sir Samp. I have known an astrologer made a cuckold in the twinkling of a star; and seen a conjurer that could not keep the devil out of his wife's circle.

Fore. [*Aside.*] What, does he twit me with my wife too? I must be better informed of this.—[*Aloud.*] Do you mean my wife, sir Sampson? Though you made a cuckold of the king of Bantam, yet by the body of the sun—

Sir Samp. By the horns of the moon, you would say, brother Capricorn.

Fore. Capricorn in your teeth, thou modern Mandeville! Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude! Take back your paper of inheritance; send your son to sea again. I'll wed my daughter to an Egyptian mummy, ere she shall incorporate with a contemner of sciences, and a defamer of virtue.

Sir Samp. [*Aside.*] Body o'me, I have gone too far;—I must not provoke honest Albumazar.—[*Aloud.*] An Egyptian mummy is an illustrious creature, my trusty hieroglyphic; and may have significations of futurity about him; odsbud, I would my son were an Egyptian mummy for thy sake. What, thou art not angry for a jest, my good Haly?—I reverence the sun, moon and stars with all my heart. What, I'll make thee a present of a mummy: now I think on't, body o'me, I have a shoulder of an Egyptian king, that I purloined from one of the pyramids, powdered with hieroglyphics; thou shalt have it brought home to thy house, and make an entertainment for all the philomaths, and students in physic and astrology, in and about London.

Fore. But what do you know of my wife, sir Sampson?

Sir Samp. Thy wife is a constellation of virtues; she's the moon, and thou art the man in the moon: nay, she is more illustrious than the moon; for she has her chastity without her inconstancy; 'sbud I was but in jest.

SCENE VI.

FORESIGHT, SIR SAMPSON, *and* JEREMY.

Sir Samp. How now, who sent for you? ha! what would you have?

[JEREMY *whispers* SIR SAMPSON.

Fore. Nay, if you were but in jest—Who's that fellow? I don't like his physiognomy.

Sir Samp. [*To* JEREMY.] My son, sir; what son, sir? my son Benjamin, hoh?

Jer. No, sir; Mr. Valentine, my master.—'Tis the first time he has been abroad since his confinement, and he comes to pay his duty to you.

Sir Samp. Well, sir.

SCENE VII.

FORESIGHT, SIR SAMPSON, VALENTINE, *and* JEREMY.

Jer. He is here, sir.

Val. Your blessing, sir.

Sir Samp. You've had it already, sir. I think I sent it you to-day in a bill of four thousand pounds.—A great deal of money, brother Foresight.

Fore. Ay, indeed, sir Sampson, a great deal of money for a young man; I wonder what he can do with it.

Sir Samp. Body o'me, so do I.—Hark ye, Valentine, if there be too much, refund the superfluity; dost hear, boy?

Val. Superfluity, sir! it will scarce pay my debts. I hope you will have more indulgence, than to oblige me to those hard conditions which my necessity signed to.

Sir Samp. Sir, how, I beseech you, what were you pleased to intimate concerning indulgence?

Val. Why, sir, that you would not go to the extremity of the conditions, but release me at least from some part.

Sir Samp. Oh, sir, I understand you—that's all, ha?

Val. Yes, sir, all that I presume to ask;—but what you, out of fatherly fondness, will be pleased to add shall be doubly welcome.

Sir Samp. No doubt of it, sweet sir: but your filial piety and my fatherly fondness would fit like two tallies.—Here's a rogue, brother Foresight, makes a bargain under hand and seal in the morning, and would be released from it in the afternoon; here's a rogue, dog, here's conscience and honesty; this is your wit now, this is the morality of your wits! You are a wit, and have been a beau, and may be a—why, sirrah, is it not here under hand and seal?—can you deny it?

Val. Sir, I don't deny it.

Sir Samp. Sirrah, you'll be hanged; I shall live to see you go up Holborn-hill.—Has he not a rogue's face?—Speak, brother, you understand physiognomy, a hanging look to me;—of all my boys the most unlike me; he has a damned Tyburn-face, without the benefit o' the clergy.

Fore. Hum—truly I don't care to discourage a young man. He has a violent death in his face; but I hope no danger of hanging.

Val. Sir, is this usage for your son?—for that old weather-headed fool, I know how to laugh at him; but you, sir—

Sir Samp. You, sir; and you, sir;—why, who are you, sir?

Val. Your son, sir.

Sir Samp. That's more than I know, sir, and I believe not.

Val. Faith, I hope not.

Sir Samp. What, would you have your mother a whore!—Did you ever hear the like! did you ever hear the like! Body o'me—

Val. I would have an excuse for your barbarity and unnatural usage.

Sir Samp. Excuse! impudence! Why, sirrah, mayn't I do what I please? are not you my slave? did not I beget you? and might not I have chosen whether I would have begot you or no? 'Oons! who are you? whence came you? what brought you into the world? how came you here, sir? here, to stand here, upon those two legs, and look erect with that audacious face, hah? answer me that? Did you come a volunteer into the world? or did I, with the lawful authority of a parent, press you to the service?

Val. I know no more why I came than you do why you called me. But here I am, and if you don't mean to provide for me, I desire you would leave me as you found me.

Sir Samp. With all my heart: come, uncase, strip, and go naked out of the world as you came into't.

Val. My clothes are soon put off;—but you must also divest me of reason, thought, passions, inclinations, affections, appetites, senses, and the huge train of attendants that you begot along with me.

Sir Samp. Body o'me, what a many-headed monster have I propagated!

Val. I am of myself a plain, easy, simple creature, and to be kept at small expense; but the retinue that you gave me are craving and invincible; they are so many devils that you have raised, and will have employment.

Sir Samp. 'Oons, what had I to do to get children!—can't a private man be born without all these followers?—Why, nothing under an emperor should be born with appetites.—Why, at this rate, a fellow that has but a groat in his pocket, may have a stomach capable of a ten-shilling ordinary.

Jer. Nay, that's as clear as the sun; I'll make oath of it before any justice in Middlesex.

Sir Samp. Here's a cormorant too.—'S'heart, this fellow was not born with you?—I did not beget him, did I?

Jer. By the provision that's made for me, you might have begot me too:—nay, and to tell your worship another truth, I believe you did, for I find I was born with those same whoreson appetites too that my master speaks of.

Sir Samp. Why, look you there now—I'll maintain it, that by the rule of right reason, this fellow ought to have been born without a palate.—'S'heart, what should he do with a distinguishing taste?—I warrant now he'd rather eat a pheasant than a piece of poor John: and smell now—why, I warrant he can smell, and loves perfumes above a stink.—Why, there's it; and music—don't you love music, scoundrel?

Jer. Yes, I have a reasonable good ear, sir, as to jigs and country dances, and the like; I don't much matter your solos or sonatas; they give me the spleen.

Sir Samp. The spleen, ha! ha! ha! a pox confound you!—solos or sonatas? 'Oons, whose son are you? how were you engendered, muckworm?

Jer. I am by my father the son of a chairman; my mother sold oysters in winter and cucumbers in summer; and I came up stairs into the world; for I was born in a cellar.

Fore. By your looks, you should go up stairs out of the world too, friend.

Sir Samp. And if this rogue were anatomised now, and dissected, he has his vessels of digestion and concoction, and so forth, large enough for the inside of a cardinal, this son of a cucumber!—These things are unaccountable and unreasonable.—Body o'me, why was not I a bear? that my cubs might have lived upon sucking their paws. Nature has been provident only to bears and spiders; the one has its nutriment in his own hands, and t'other spins his habitation out of his own entrails.

Val. Fortune was provident enough to supply all the necessities of my nature, if I had my right of inheritance.

Sir Samp. Again! 'Oons, han't you four thousand pounds—if I had it again, I would not give thee a groat.—What, wouldst thou have me turn pelican, and feed thee out of my own vitals?—'S'heart, live by your wits,—you were always fond of the wits:—now let's see if you have wit enough to keep yourself.—Your brother will be in town to-night or to-morrow morning, and then look you perform covenants, and so your friend and servant.—Come, brother Foresight.

SCENE VIII.

VALENTINE *and* JEREMY.

Jer. I told you what your visit would come to.

Val. 'Tis as much as I expected.—I did not come to see him: I came to Angelica; but since she was gone abroad it was easily turned another way; and at least looked well on my side.—What's here? Mrs. Foresight and Mrs. Frail; they are earnest.—I'll avoid 'em.—Come this way, and go and inquire when Angelica will return.

SCENE IX.

MRS. FORESIGHT *and* MRS. FRAIL.

Frail. What have you to do to watch me! 'slife, I'll do what I please.

Mrs. Fore. You will?

Frail. Yes, marry will I.—A great piece of business to go to Covent-Garden square in a hackney-coach, and take a turn with one's friend!

Mrs. Fore. Nay, two or three turns, I'll take my oath.

Frail. Well, what if I took twenty?—I warrant if you had been there, it had been only innocent recreation.—Lord, where's the comfort of this life, if we can't have the happiness of conversing where we like?

Mrs. Fore. But can't you converse at home?—I own it, I think there's no happiness like conversing with an agreeable man; I don't quarrel at that, nor I don't think but your conversation was very innocent; but the place is public, and to be seen with a man in a hackney-coach is scandalous: what if anybody else should have seen you alight, as I did!—How can anybody be happy, while they're in perpetual fear of being seen and censured!—Besides, it would not only reflect upon you, sister, but me.

Frail. Pooh, here's a clutter!—Why should it reflect upon you?—I don't doubt but you have thought yourself happy in a hackney-coach before now.—If I had gone to Knightsbridge, or to Chelsea, or to Spring-Garden, or Barn Elms, with a man alone—something might have been said.

Mrs. Fore. Why, was I ever in any of those places? what do you mean, sister?

Frail. Was I? what do you mean?

Mrs. Fore. You have been at a worse place.

Frail. I at a worse place, and with a man!

Mrs. Fore. I suppose you would not go alone to the World's-End.

Frail. The world's-end! what, do you mean to banter me?

Mrs. Fore. Poor innocent! you don't know that there's a place called the World's-End? I'll swear you can keep your countenance purely, you'd make an admirable player.

Frail. I'll swear you have a great deal of confidence, and in my mind too much for the stage.

Mrs. Fore. Very well, that will appear who has most; you never were at the World's-End?

Frail. No.

Mrs. Fore. You deny it positively to my face?

Frail. Your face! what's your face?

Mrs. Fore. No matter for that, it's as good a face as yours.

Frail. Not by a dozen years' wearing.—But I do deny it positively to your face then.

Mrs. Fore. I'll allow you now to find fault with my face;—for I'll swear your impudence has put me out of countenance:—but look you here now,—where did you lose this gold bodkin?—O sister, sister!

Frail. My bodkin?

Mrs. Fore. Nay, 'tis yours, look at it.

Frail. Well, if you go to that, where did you find this bodkin?—O, sister, sister!—sister every way.

Mrs. Fore. [*Aside.*] O devil on't, that I could not discover her without betraying myself!

Frail. I have heard gentlemen say, sister, that one should take great care, when one makes a thrust in fencing, not to lie open one's self.

Mrs. Fore. It's very true, sister; well, since all's out, and as you say, since we are both wounded, let us do what is often done in duels, take care of one another, and grow better friends than before.

Frail. With all my heart: ours are but slight flesh wounds, and if we keep 'em from air, not at all dangerous: well, give me your hand in token of sisterly secrecy and affection.

Mrs. Fore. Here 'tis with all my heart.

Frail. Well, as an earnest of friendship and confidence, I'll acquaint you with a design that I have. To tell truth, and speak openly one to another, I'm afraid the world have observed us more than we have observed one another. You have a rich husband, and are provided for; I am at a loss, and have no great stock either of fortune or reputation; and therefore must look sharply about me. Sir Sampson has a son that is expected to-night; and by the account I have heard of his education, can be no conjurer; the estate you know is to be made over to him:—now if I could wheedle him, sister, ha? you understand me?

Mrs. Fore. I do; and will help you to the utmost of my power.—And I can tell you one thing that falls out luckily enough; my awkward daughter-in-law, who you know is designed to be his wife, is grown fond of Mr. Tattle; now if we can improve that, and make her have an aversion for the booby, it may go a great way towards his liking you. Here they come together; and let us contrive some way or other to leave 'em together.

SCENE X.

MRS. FORESIGHT, MRS. FRAIL, TATTLE, *and* MISS PRUE.

Prue. Mother, mother, mother, look you here!

Mrs. Fore. Fy, fy, miss! how you bawl.—Besides, I have told you, you must not call me mother.

Prue. What must I call you then? are you not my father's wife?

Mrs. Fore. Madam; you must say madam.—By my soul, I shall fancy myself old indeed, to have this great girl call me mother!—Well, but, miss, what are you so overjoyed at?

Prue. Look you here, madam, then, what Mr. Tattle has given me.—Look you here, cousin, here's a snuff-box; nay, there's snuff in't;—here, will you have any?—Oh good! how sweet it is.—Mr. Tattle is all over sweet, his peruke is sweet, and his gloves are sweet, and his handkerchief is sweet,

pure sweet, sweeter than roses.—Smell him, mother, madam, I mean.—He gave me this ring for a kiss.

Tat. O fy, miss! you must not kiss and tell.

Prue. Yes; I may tell my mother.—And he says he'll give me something to make me smell so.—[*To* TATTLE.] Oh pray lend me your handkerchief.—Smell, cousin; he says, he'll give me something that will make my smocks smell this way.—Is not it pure?—It's better than lavender, mun—I'm resolved I wont let nurse put any more lavender among my smocks—ha, cousin?

Frail. Fy, miss! amongst your linen, you must say;—you must never say smock.

Prue. Why, it is not bawdy, is it, cousin?

Tat. Oh, madam, you are too severe upon miss; you must not find fault with her pretty simplicity, it becomes her strangely.—Pretty miss, don't let 'em persuade you out of your innocency.

Mrs. Fore. Oh, demm you, toad!—I wish you don't persuade her out of her innocency.

Tat. Who I, madam?—Oh Lord, how can your ladyship have such a thought—sure you don't know me?

Frail. Ah, devil! sly devil!—He's as close, sister, as a confessor.—He thinks we don't observe him.

Mrs. Fore. A cunning cur! how soon he could find out a fresh harmless creature! and left us, sister, presently.

Tat. Upon reputation—

Mrs. Fore. They're all so, sister, these men:—they love to have the spoiling of a young thing, they are as fond of it, as of being first in the fashion, or of seeing a new play the first day.—I warrant it would break Mr. Tattle's heart, to think that anybody else should be beforehand with him.

Tat. Oh Lord, I swear I would not for the world—

Frail. O hang you! who'll believe you?—You'd be hanged before you'd confess—we know you—she's very pretty!—Lord, what pure red and white!—she looks so wholesome;—ne'er stir, I don't know, but I fancy, if I were a man—

Prue. How you love to jeer one, cousin!

Mrs. Fore. Hark ye, sister.—By my soul the girl is spoiled already—d'ye think she'll ever endure a great lubberly tarpaulin!—gad, I warrant you, she won't let him come near her, after Mr. Tattle.

Frail. O' my soul, I'm afraid not—eh!—filthy creature, that smells all of pitch and tar.—[*To* TATTLE.] Devil take you, you confounded toad!—why did you see her before she was married?

Mrs. Fore. Nay, why did we let him?—My husband will hang us;—he'll think we brought 'em acquainted.

Frail. Come, faith, let us be gone.—If my brother Foresight should find us with them, he'd think so, sure enough.

Mrs. Fore. So he would—but then leaving 'em together is as bad.—And he's such a sly devil, he'll never miss an opportunity.

Frail. I don't care; I won't be seen in't.

Mrs. Fore. Well, if you should, Mr. Tattle, you'll have a world to answer for;—remember I wash my hands of it—I'm throughly innocent.

SCENE XI.

TATTLE *and* MISS PRUE.

Prue. What makes 'em go away, Mr. Tattle? what do they mean, do you know?

Tat. Yes, my dear,—I think I can guess;—but hang me if I know the reason of it.

Prue. Come, must not we go too?

Tat. No, no, they don't mean that.

Prue. No! what then? what shall you and I do together?

Tat. I must make love to you, pretty miss; will you let me make love to you?

Prue. Yes, if you please.

Tat. [*Aside.*] Frank, egad, at least. What a pox does Mrs. Foresight mean by this civility? Is it to make a fool of me? or does she leave us together out of good morality, and do as she would be done by?—Gad, I'll understand it so.

Prue. Well; and how will you make love to me? come, I long to have you begin. Must I make love too? you must tell me how.

Tat. You must let me speak, miss, you must not speak first; I must ask you questions, and you must answer.

Prue. What, is it like the catechism?—come then, ask me.

Tat. D'ye think you can love me?

Prue. Yes.

Tat. Pooh! pox! you must not say yes already; I shan't care a farthing for you then in a twinkling.

Prue. What must I say then?

Tat. Why, you must say no, or you believe not, or you can't tell.

Prue. Why, must I tell a lie then?

Tat. Yes, if you'd be well-bred;—all well-bred persons lie.—Besides, you are a woman, you must never speak what you think: your words must contradict your thoughts; but your actions may contradict your words. So, when I ask you, if you can love me, you must say no, but you must love me too. If I tell you you are handsome, you must deny it, and say I flatter you. But you must think yourself more charming than I speak you: and like me, for the beauty which I say you have, as much as if I had it myself. If I ask you to kiss me, you must be angry, but you must not refuse me. If I ask you for more, you must be more angry,—but more complying; and as soon as ever I make you say you'll cry out, you must be sure to hold your tongue.

Prue. O Lord, I swear this is pure!—I like it better than our old-fashioned country way of speaking one's mind;—and must not you lie too?

Tat. Hum!—Yes; but you must believe I speak truth.

Prue. O Gemini! well, I always had a great mind to tell lies; but they frighted me, and said it was a sin.

Tat. Well, my pretty creature; will you make me happy by giving me a kiss?

Prue. No, indeed; I'm angry at you.

[*Runs and kisses him.*

Tat. Hold, hold, that's pretty well;—but you should not have given it me, but have suffered me to have taken it.

Prue. Well, we'll do't again.

Tat. With all my heart.—Now, then, my little angel! [*Kisses her.*

Prue. Pish!

Tat. That's right—again, my charmer! [*Kisses again.*

Prue. O fy! nay, now I can't abide you.

Tat. Admirable! that was as well as if you had been born and bred in Covent-garden. And won't you show me, pretty miss, where your bedchamber is?

Prue. No, indeed won't I; but I'll run there and hide myself from you behind the curtains.

Tat. I'll follow you.

Prue. Ah, but I'll hold the door with both hands, and be angry;—and you shall push me down before you come in.

Tat. No, I'll come in first, and push you down afterwards.

Prue. Will you? then I'll be more angry, and more complying.

Tat. Then I'll make you cry out.

Prue. Oh, but you shan't; for I'll hold my tongue.

Tat. Oh, my dear apt scholar!

Prue. Well, now I'll run, and make more haste than you.

Tat. You shall not fly so fast as I'll pursue. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Gallery adjoining* Prue's *Bedchamber.*

Nurse.

Miss! miss! miss Prue!—mercy on me, marry and amen!—Why, what's become of the child? why miss! Miss Foresight!—Sure, she has locked herself up in her chamber, and gone to sleep, or to prayers.—Miss! miss! I hear her;—come to your father, child; open the door—open the door, miss!—I hear you cry Hush!—O Lord, who's there?—[*Peeps through the keyhole.*]—What's here to do?—O the father! a man with her!—Why, miss, I say! God's my life, here's fine doings towards!—O Lord, we're all undone!—O you young harlotry!—[*Knocks.*] Od's my life! won't you open the door?—I'll come in the back-way.

SCENE II.

Tattle *and* Miss Prue.

Prue. O Lord, she's coming!—and she'll tell my father; what shall I do now!

Tat. Pox take her!—if she had stayed two minutes longer, I should have wished for her coming.

Prue. O dear, what shall I say? tell me, Mr. Tattle, tell me a lie.

Tat. There's no occasion for a lie; I could never tell a lie to no purpose;—but since we have done nothing, we must say nothing, I think. I hear her; I'll leave you together, and come off as you can. [*Thrusts her in, and shuts the door.*

SCENE III.

Tattle, Valentine, Scandal, *and* Angelica.

Ang. You can't accuse me of inconstancy; I never told you that I loved you.

Val. But I can accuse you of uncertainty, for not telling me whether you did or not.

Ang. You mistake indifference for uncertainty; I never had concern enough to ask myself the question.

Scan. Nor good-nature enough to answer him that did ask you; I'll say that for you, madam.

Ang. What, are you setting up for good-nature?

Scan. Only for the affectation of it, as the women do for ill-nature.

Ang. Persuade your friend that it is all affectation.

Scan. I shall receive no benefit from the opinion; for I know no effectual difference between continued affectation and reality.

Tat. [*Coming up.*] Scandal, are you in private discourse? anything of secrecy? [*Aside to* Scandal.

Scan. Yes, but I dare trust you; we were talking of Angelica's love for Valentine; you won't speak of it?

Tat. No, no, not a syllable;—I know that's a secret, for it's whispered everywhere.

Scan. Ha! ha! ha!

Ang. What is, Mr. Tattle? I heard you say something was whispered everywhere.

Scan. Your love of Valentine.

Ang. How!

Tat. No, madam, his love for your ladyship.—Gad take me, I beg your pardon;—for I never heard a word of your ladyship's passion till this instant.

Ang. My passion! and who told you of my passion, pray, sir?

Scan. [*Aside to* Tattle.] Why, is the devil in you? did not I tell it you for a secret?

Tat. [*Aside to* Scandal.] Gad so, but I thought she might have been trusted with her own affairs.

Scan. Is that your discretion? trust a woman with herself?

Tat. You say true, I beg your pardon;—I'll bring all off.—[*Aloud.*] It was impossible, madam, for me to imagine, that a person of your ladyship's wit and gallantry could have so long received the passionate addresses of the accomplished Valentine, and yet remain insensible; therefore you will pardon me, if, from a just weight of his merit, with your ladyship's good judgment, I formed the balance of a reciprocal affection.

Val. O the devil! what damned costive poet

has given thee this lesson of fustian to get by rote?

Ang. I dare swear you wrong him, it is his own; and Mr. Tattle only judges of the success of others from the effects of his own merit. For certainly Mr. Tattle was never denied anything in his life.

Tat. O Lord! yes, indeed, madam, several times.

Ang. I swear I don't think 'tis possible.

Tat. Yes, I vow and swear I have: Lord, madam, I'm the most unfortunate man in the world, and the most cruelly used by the ladies.

Ang. Nay, now you are ungrateful.

Tat. No, I hope not:—'tis as much ingratitude to own some favours as to conceal others.

Val. There, now it's out.

Ang. I don't understand you now: I thought you had never asked anything but what a lady might modestly grant, and you confess.

Scan. So, faith, your business is done here; now you may go brag somewhere else.

Tat. Brag! O heavens! why, did I name anybody?

Ang. No, I suppose that is not in your power; but you would if you could, no doubt on't.

Tat. Not in my power, madam! what, does your ladyship mean that I have no woman's reputation in my power?

Scan. [*Aside to* TATTLE.] 'Oons, why, you won't own it, will you?

Tat. Faith, madam, you're in the right: no more I have, as I hope to be saved; I never had it in my power to say anything to a lady's prejudice in my life. For, as I was telling you, madam, I have been the most unsuccessful creature living, in things of that nature; and never had the good fortune to be trusted once with a lady's secret, not once.

Ang. No!

Val. Not once, I dare answer for him.

Scan. And I'll answer for him; for I'm sure if he had, he would have told me.—I find, madam, you don't know Mr. Tattle.

Tat. No, indeed, madam, you don't know me at all, I find. For sure my intimate friends would have known—

Ang. Then it seems you would have told, if you had been trusted.

Tat. O pox, Scandal! that was too far put.—Never have told particulars, madam. Perhaps I might have talked as of a third person, or have introduced an amour of my own, in conversation, by way of novel: but never have explained particulars.

Ang. But whence comes the reputation of Mr. Tattle's secrecy, if he was never trusted?

Scan. Why thence it arises: the thing is proverbially spoken; but may be applied to him.—As if we should say in general terms, *He only is secret who never was trusted;* a satirical proverb upon our sex.—There's another upon yours, as *She is chaste who was never asked the question.* That's all.

Val. A couple of very civil proverbs truly: 'tis hard to tell whether the lady or Mr. Tattle be the more obliged to you. For you found her virtue upon the backwardness of the men, and his secrecy upon the mistrust of the women.

Tat. Gad, it's very true, madam, I think we are obliged to acquit ourselves; and for my part—but your ladyship is to speak first.

Ang. Am I? well, I freely confess I have resisted a great deal of temptation.

Tat. And, egad, I have given some temptation that has not been resisted.

Val. Good!

Ang. I cite Valentine here, to declare to the court how fruitless he has found his endeavours, and to confess all his solicitations and my denials.

Val. I am ready to plead not guilty for you, and guilty for myself.

Scan. So, why this is fair, here's demonstration with a witness!

Tat. Well, my witnesses are not present. But I confess I have had favours from persons—but as the favours are numberless, so the persons are nameless.

Scan. Pooh, this proves nothing.

Tat. No? I can show letters, lockets, pictures, and rings; and if there be occasion for witnesses, I can summon the maids at the chocolate-houses, all the porters at Pall-Mall and Covent-Garden, the door-keepers at the play-house, the drawers at Locket's, Pontac's, the Rummer, Spring-Garden; my own landlady, and valet-de-chambre; all who shall make oath, that I receive more letters than the Secretary's Office; and that I have more vizor-masks to inquire for me than ever went to see the Hermaphrodite, or the Naked Prince. And it is notorious, that in a country church, once, an inquiry being made who I was, it was answered, I was the famous Tattle, who had ruined so many women.

Val. It was there, I suppose, you got the nick-name of the Great Turk.

Tat. True, I was called Turk-Tattle all over the parish.—The next Sunday all the old women kept their daughters at home, and the parson had not half his congregation. He would have brought me into the spiritual court, but I was revenged upon him, for he had a handsome daughter, whom I initiated into the science. But I repented it afterwards, for it was talked of in town; and a lady of quality, that shall be nameless, in a raging fit of jealousy, came down in her coach and six horses, and exposed herself upon my account; gad I was sorry for it with all my heart.—You know whom I mean—you know where we raffled—

Scan. Mum, Tattle.

Val. 'Sdeath, are not you ashamed?

Ang. O barbarous! I never heard so insolent a piece of vanity.—Fy, Mr. Tattle!—I'll swear I could not have believed it.—Is this your secrecy?

Tat. Gad so, the heat of my story carried me beyond my discretion, as the heat of the lady's passion hurried her beyond her reputation.—But I hope you don't know whom I mean; for there were a great many ladies raffled.—Pox on't! now could I bite off my tongue.

Scan. No, don't; for then you'll tell us no more.—Come, I'll recommend a song to you upon the hint of my two proverbs, and I see one in the next room that will sing it. [*Exit.*

Tat. For Heaven's sake if you do guess, say nothing; gad, I'm very unfortunate.

Re-enter SCANDAL *with one to sing.*

Scan. Pray sing the first song in the last new play.

SONG.

A nymph and a swain to Apollo once pray'd,
The swain had been jilted, the nymph been betray'd:
Their intent was to try if his oracle knew
E'er a nymph that was chaste, or a swain that was true.

Apollo was mute, and had like t'have been posed,
But sagely at length he this secret disclosed:
"He alone won't betray in whom none will confide:
And the nymph may be chaste that has never been tried."

SCENE IV.

ANGELICA, VALENTINE, SCANDAL, TATTLE, Sir SAMPSON, Mrs. FRAIL, Miss PRUE, *and* Servant.

Sir Samp. Is Ben come? odso, my son Ben come? odd I'm glad on't: where is he? I long to see him.—Now, Mrs. Frail, you shall see my son Ben.—Body o'me, he's the hopes of my family.—I han't seen him these three years.—I warrant he's grown.—Call him in, bid him make haste.—[*Exit* Servant.] I'm ready to cry for joy.

Frail. Now, miss, you shall see your husband.

Prue. [*Aside to* Mrs. FRAIL.] Pish, he shall be none of my husband.

Frail. [*Aside to* PRUE.] Hush: well he shan't, leave that to me.—I'll beckon Mr. Tattle to us.

Ang. Won't you stay and see your brother?

Val. We are the twin-stars, and cannot shine in one sphere; when he rises I must set.—Besides, if I should stay, I don't know but my father in good-nature may press me to the immediate signing the deed of conveyance of my estate; and I'll defer it as long as I can.—Well, you'll come to a resolution?

Ang. I can't. Resolution must come to me, or I shall never have one.

Scan. Come, Valentine, I'll go with you; I've something in my head to communicate to you.

SCENE V.

ANGELICA, Sir SAMPSON, TATTLE, Mrs. FRAIL, *and* Miss PRUE.

Sir Samp. What, is my son Valentine gone? what, is he sneaked off, and would not see his brother? There's an unnatural whelp! there's an ill-natured dog!—What, were you here too, madam, and could not keep him? could neither love, nor duty, nor natural affection, oblige him? Odsbud, madam, have no more to say to him; he is not worth your consideration. The rogue has not a drachm of generous love about him: all interest, all interest; he's an undone scoundrel, and courts your estate: body o'me, he does not care a doit for your person.

Ang. I'm pretty even with him, sir Sampson; for if ever I could have liked anything in him, it should have been his estate too: but since that's gone, the bait's off, and the naked hook appears.

Sir Samp. Odsbud, well spoken; and you are a wiser woman than I thought you were: for most young women now-a-days are to be tempted with a naked hook.

Ang. If I marry, sir Sampson, I'm for a good estate with any man, and for any man with a good estate: therefore if I were obliged to make a choice, I declare I'd rather have you than your son.

Sir Samp. Faith and troth, you're a wise woman, and I'm glad to hear you say so; I was afraid you were in love with the reprobate; odd, I was sorry for you with all my heart: hang him, mongrel; cast him off; you shall see the rogue show himself, and make love to some desponding Cadua of four-score for sustenance. Odd, I love to see a young spendthrift forced to cling to an old woman for support, like ivy round a dead oak: faith I do; I love to see 'em hug and cotton together, like down upon a thistle.

SCENE VI.

ANGELICA, Sir SAMPSON, TATTLE, Mrs. FRAIL, Miss PRUE, BEN, *and* Servant.

Ben. Where's father?

Serv. There, sir, his back's toward you.

Sir Samp. My son Ben! bless thee, my dear boy; body o'me, thou art heartily welcome.

Ben. Thank you, father, and I'm glad to see you.

Sir Samp. Odsbud, and I am glad to see thee; kiss me, boy, kiss me again and again, dear Ben.
[*Kisses him.*

Ben. So, so, enough, father.—Mess, I'd rather kiss these gentlewomen.

Sir Samp. And so thou shalt.—Mrs. Angelica, my son Ben.

Ben. Forsooth, if you please.—[*Salutes her.*] Nay, mistress, I'm not for dropping anchor here; about ship i'faith.—[*Kisses* Mrs. FRAIL.] Nay, and you, too, my little cock-boat—so.
[*Kisses* Miss PRUE.

Tat. Sir, you're welcome ashore.

Ben. Thank you, thank you, friend.

Sir Samp. Thou hast been many a weary league, Ben, since I saw thee.

Ben. Ey, ey, been! been far enough, an that be all.—Well, father, and how do all at home? how does brother Dick, and brother Val?

Sir Samp. Dick! body o'me, Dick has been dead these two years! I writ you word when you were at Leghorn.

Ben. Mess, that's true; marry, I had forgot. Dick's dead, as you say.—Well, and how? I have many questions to ask you. Well, you ben't married again, father, be you?

Sir Samp. No, I intend you shall marry, Ben; I would not marry for thy sake.

Ben. Nay, what does that signify?—An you marry again—why, then, I'll go to sea again, so there's one for t'other, an that be all.—Pray don't let me be your hindrance; e'en marry a' God's name, an the wind sit that way. As for my part, mayhap I have no mind to marry.

Frail. That would be a pity, such a handsome young gentleman.

Ben. Handsome! he! he! he! nay, forsooth, an you be for joking, I'll joke with you; for I love my jest, an the ship were sinking, as we say'n at sea. But I'll tell you why I don't much stand toward matrimony. I love to roam about from port to port, and from land to land: I could never

abide to be port-bound, as we call it; now, a man that is married has, as it were, d'ye see, his feet in the bilboes, and mayhap mayn't get 'em out again when he would.

Sir Samp. Ben's a wag.

Ben. A man that is married, d'ye see, is no more like another man than a galley-slave is like one of us free sailors; he is chained to an oar all his life; and mayhap forced to tug a leaky vessel into the bargain.

Sir Samp. A very wag! Ben's a very wag! only a little rough, he wants a little polishing.

Frail. Not at all; I like his humour mightily, it's plain and honest; I should like such a humour in a husband extremely.

Ben. Say'n you so, forsooth? Marry, and I should like such a handsome gentlewoman for a bedfellow hugely; how say you, mistress, would you like going to sea? Mess, you're a tight vessel! and well rigged, an you were but as well manned.

Frail. I should not doubt that, if you were master of me.

Ben. But I'll tell you one thing, an you come to sea in a high wind, or that lady—you mayn't carry so much sail o' your head.—Top and top-gallant, by the mess.

Frail. No, why so?

Ben. Why, an you do you may run the risk to be overset, and then you'll carry your keels above water, he! he! he!

Ang. I swear, Mr. Benjamin is the veriest wag in nature; an absolute sea-wit.

Sir Samp. Nay, Ben has parts, but, as I told you before, they want a little polishing: you must not take anything ill, madam.

Ben. No, I hope the gentlewoman is not angry; I mean all in good part; for if I give a jest I'll take a jest: and so, forsooth, you may be as free with me.

Ang. I thank you, sir, I am not at all offended.—But methinks, sir Sampson, you should leave him alone with his mistress.—Mr. Tattle, we must not hinder lovers.

Tat. [*Aside to* Miss PRUE.] Well, miss, I have your promise.

Sir Samp. Body o' me, madam, you say true.—Look you, Ben, this is your mistress.—Come, miss, you must not be shamefaced; we'll leave you together.

Prue. I can't abide to be left alone, mayn't my cousin stay with me?

Sir Samp. No, no.—Come, let's away.

Ben. Look you, father, mayhap the young woman mayn't take a liking to me.

Sir Samp. I warrant thee, boy; come, come, we'll be gone; I'll venture that.

SCENE VII.

BEN *and* MISS PRUE.

Ben. Come, mistress, will you please to sit down? for an you stand astern a that'n, we shall never grapple together.—Come, I'll haul a chair; there, an you please to sit I'll sit by you.

Prue. You need not sit so near one; if you have anything to say I can hear you farther off, I an't deaf.

Ben. Why, that's true, as you say; nor I an't dumb; I can be heard as far as another;—I'll heave off to please you.—[*Sits farther off.*] An we were a league asunder, I'd undertake to hold discourse with you, an 'twere not a main high wind indeed, and full in my teeth. Look you, forsooth, I am, as it were, bound for the land of matrimony; 'tis a voyage, d'ye see, that was none of my seeking, I was commanded by father, and if you like of it mayhap I may steer into your harbour. How say you, mistress? The short of the thing is, that if you like me, and I like you, we may chance to swing in a hammock together.

Prue. I don't know what to say to you, nor I don't care to speak with you at all.

Ben. No? I'm sorry for that.—But pray, why are you so scornful?

Prue. As long as one must not speak one's mind, one had better not speak at all, I think, and truly I won't tell a lie for the matter.

Ben. Nay, you say true in that, 'tis but a folly to lie: for to speak one thing, and to think just the contrary way, is, as it were, to look one way and row another. Now, for my part, d'ye see, I'm for carrying things above board, I'm not for keeping anything under hatches,—so that if you ben't as willing as I, say so a' God's name, there's no harm done. Mayhap you may be shamefaced? some maidens, tho'f they love a man well enough, yet they don't care to tell'n so to's face: if that's the case, why silence gives consent.

Prue. But I'm sure it is not so, for I'll speak sooner than you should believe that; and I'll speak truth, though one should always tell a lie to a man; and I don't care, let my father do what he will; I'm too big to be whipped, so I'll tell you plainly I don't like you, nor love you at all, nor never will, that's more: so, there's your answer for you; and don't trouble me no more, you ugly thing!

Ben. Look you, young woman, you may learn to give good words however. I spoke you fair, d'ye see, and civil.—As for your love or your liking, I don't value it of a rope's end;—and mayhap I like you as little as you do me.—What I said was in obedience to father; gad I fear a whipping no more than you do. But I tell you one thing, if you should give such language at sea you'd have a cat o' nine-tails laid cross your shoulders. Flesh! who are you? You heard t'other handsome young woman speak civilly to me, of her own accord: whatever you think of yourself, gad I don't think you are any more to compare to her than a can of small beer to a bowl of punch.

Prue. Well, and there's a handsome gentleman, and a fine gentleman, and a sweet gentleman, that was here, that loves me, and I love him; and if he sees you speak to me any more he'll thrash your jacket for you, he will, you great sea-calf!

Ben. What, do you mean that fair-weather spark that was here just now? will he thrash my jacket?—let'n—let'n. But an he comes near me, mayhap I may giv'n a salt eel for's supper, for all that. What does father mean to leave me alone as soon as I come home, with such a dirty dowdy? Sea-calf! I an't calf enough to lick your chalked face, you cheese-curd you!—Marry thee! 'oons, I'll marry a Lapland witch as soon, and live upon selling contrary winds and wrecked vessels.

Prue. I won't be called names, nor I won't be abused thus, so I won't.—If I were a man [*Cries*], you durst not talk at this rate;—no, you durst not, you stinking tar-barrel!

SCENE VIII.

BEN, MISS PRUE, MRS. FORESIGHT, *and* MRS. FRAIL.

Mrs. Fore. [*Aside to* MRS. FRAIL.] They have quarrelled just as we could wish.

Ben. Tar-barrel? let your sweetheart there call me so if he'll take your part, your Tom Essence, and I'll say something to him; gad, I'll lace his musk doublet for him! I'll make him stink! he shall smell more like a weasel than a civet cat afore I ha' done with 'en.

Mrs. Fore. Bless me, what's the matter, miss? What, does she cry?—Mr. Benjamin, what have you done to her?

Ben. Let her cry: the more she cries, the less she'll—she has been gathering foul weather in her mouth, and now it rains out at her eyes.

Mrs. Fore. Come, miss, come along with me, and tell me, poor child.

Frail. Lord, what shall we do? there's my brother Foresight and sir Sampson coming.—Sister, do you take miss down into the parlour, and I'll carry Mr. Benjamin into my chamber, for they must not know that they are fallen out.—Come, sir, will you venture yourself with me?

[*Looking kindly on him.*

Ben. Venture, mess, and that I will, though 'twere to sea in a storm.

SCENE IX.

SIR SAMPSON *and* FORESIGHT.

Sir Samp. I left 'em together here; what, are they gone? Ben's a brisk boy; he has got her into a corner; father's own son, faith, he'll touzle her, and mouzle her; the rogue's sharp set, coming from sea; if he should not stay for saying grace, old Foresight, but fall too without the help of a parson, ha? Odd, if he should, I could not be angry with him; 'twould be but like me, *a chip of the old block.* Ha! thou'rt melancholic, old prognostication; as melancholic as if thou hadst spilt the salt, or pared thy nails on a Sunday.—Come, cheer up, look about thee: look up, old star-gazer.—[*Aside.*] Now is he poring upon the ground for a crooked pin, or an old horse-nail, with the head towards him.

Fore. Sir Sampson, we'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

Sir Samp. With all my heart.

Fore. At ten o'clock, punctually at ten.

Sir Samp. To a minute, to a second; thou shalt set thy watch, and the bridegroom shall observe its motions; they shall be married to a minute; go to bed to a minute; and when the alarm strikes, they shall keep time like the figures of St. Dunstan's clock, and *consummatum est* shall ring all over the parish.

SCENE X.

SIR SAMPSON, FORESIGHT, *and* SCANDAL.

Scan. Sir Sampson, sad news!

Fore. Bless us!

Sir Samp. Why, what's the matter?

Scan. Can't you guess at what ought to afflict you and him, and all of us, more than anything else?

Sir Samp. Body o'me, I don't know any universal grievance but a new tax, or the loss of the Canary fleet. Unless popery should be landed in the west, or the French fleet were at anchor at Blackwall.

Scan. No! undoubtedly Mr. Foresight knew all this, and might have prevented it.

Fore. 'Tis no earthquake!

Scan. No, not yet; nor whirlwind. But we don't know what it may come to.—But it has had a consequence already that touches us all.

Sir Samp. Why, body o'me, out with't.

Scan. Something has appeared to your son Valentine.—He's gone to bed upon't, and very ill.—He speaks little, yet says he has a world to say. Asks for his father and the wise Foresight; talks of Raymond Lully, and the ghost of Lilly. He has secrets to impart I suppose to you two. I can get nothing out of him but sighs. He desires he may see you in the morning, but would not be disturbed to-night, because he has some business to do in a dream.

Sir Samp. Hoity, toity, what have I to do with his dreams or his divinations?—Body o'me, this is a trick to defer signing the conveyance. I warrant, the devil will tell him in a dream, that he must not part with his estate; but I'll bring him a parson, to tell him that the devil's a liar; or, if that won't do, I'll bring a lawyer that shall outlie the devil. And so I'll try whether my blackguard or his shall get the better of the day.

SCENE XI.

SCANDAL *and* FORESIGHT.

Scan. Alas, Mr. Foresight! I'm afraid all is not right.—You are a wise man, and a conscientious man; a searcher into obscurity and futurity; and if you commit an error, it is with a great deal of consideration and discretion and caution.

Fore. Ah, good Mr. Scandal—

Scan. Nay, nay, 'tis manifest; I do not flatter you.—But Sir Sampson is hasty, very hasty;—I'm afraid he is not scrupulous enough, Mr. Foresight.—He has been wicked, and heaven grant he may mean well in his affair with you.—But my mind gives me, these things cannot be wholly insignificant. You are wise, and should not be over-reached, methinks you should not.

Fore. Alas, Mr. Scandal!—*Humanum est errare.*

Scan. You say true, man will err; mere man will err—but you are something more.—There have been wise men; but they were such as you;—men who consulted the stars, and were observers of omens.—Solomon was wise, but how?—by his judgment in astrology:—so says Pineda in his third book and eighth chapter.

Fore. You are learned, Mr. Scandal!

Scan. A trifler—but a lover of art.—And the wise men of the East owed their instruction to a star, which is rightly observed by Gregory the Great in favour of astrology! And Albertus Magnus makes it the most valuable science: because (says he) it teaches us to consider the causation of causes, in the causes of things.

Fore. I protest I honour you, Mr. Scandal;—

I did not think you had been read in these matters.—Few young men are inclined—

Scan. I thank my stars that have inclined me.—But I fear this marriage, and making over this estate, this transferring of a rightful inheritance, will bring judgments upon us. I prophesy it, and I would not have the fate of Cassandra, not to be believed. Valentine is disturbed, what can be the cause of that? and sir Sampson is hurried on by an unusual violence.—I fear he does not act wholly from himself; methinks he does not look as he used to do.

Fore. He was always of an impetuous nature.—But as to this marriage, I have consulted the stars, and all appearances are prosperous.

Scan. Come, come, Mr. Foresight, let not the prospect of worldly lucre carry you beyond your judgment, nor against your conscience:—you are not satisfied that you act justly.

Fore. How?

Scan. You are not satisfied, I say.—I am loath to discourage you—but it is palpable that you are not satisfied.

Fore. How does it appear, Mr. Scandal? I think I am very well satisfied.

Scan. Either you suffer yourself to deceive yourself; or you do not know yourself.

Fore. Pray explain yourself.

Scan. Do you sleep well o'nights?

Fore. Very well.

Scan. Are you certain? you do not look so.

Fore. I am in health, I think.

Scan. So was Valentine this morning; and looked just so.

Fore. How! am I altered any way? I don't perceive it.

Scan. That may be, but your beard is longer than it was two hours ago.

Fore. Indeed! bless me!

SCENE XII.

SCANDAL, FORESIGHT, *and* MRS. FORESIGHT.

Mrs. Fore. Husband, will you go to bed? it's ten o'clock.—Mr. Scandal, your servant.

Scan. [*Aside.*] Pox on her! she has interrupted my design:—but I must work her into the project.—[*Aloud.*] You keep early hours, madam.

Mrs. Fore. Mr. Foresight is punctual, we sit up after him.

Fore. My dear, pray lend me your glass, your little looking-glass.

Scan. Pray, lend it him, madam—I'll tell you the reason.—[*She gives him the glass:* SCANDAL *and she talk aside.*] My passion for you is grown so violent, that I am no longer master of myself.—I was interrupted in the morning, when you had charity enough to give me your attention, and I had hopes of finding another opportunity of explaining myself to you;—but was disappointed all this day; and the uneasiness that has attended me ever since, brings me now hither at this unseasonable hour.

Mrs. Fore. Was there ever such impudence! to make love to me before my husband's face! I'll swear I'll tell him.

Scan. Do; I'll die a martyr, rather than disclaim my passion. But come a little farther this way, and I'll tell you what project I had to get him out of the way, that I might have an opportunity of waiting upon you.

Fore. [*Looking in the glass.*] I do not see any revolution here;—methinks I look with a serene and benign aspect—pale, a little pale—but the roses of these cheeks have been gathered many years.—Ha! I do not like that sudden flushing;—gone already!—hem, hem, hem! faintish. My heart is pretty good; yet it beats; and my pulses, ha!—I have none—mercy on me!—hum—yes, here they are—gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop, hey! whither will they hurry me?—Now they're gone again—and now I'm faint again; and pale again, and, hem! and my, hem!—breath, hem!—grows short; hem! hem! he, he, hem!

Scan. [*Aside to* MRS. FORESIGHT.] It takes; pursue it, in the name of love and pleasure!

Mrs. Fore. How do you do, Mr. Foresight?

Fore. Hum, not so well as I thought I was. Lend me your hand.

Scan. Look you there now—your lady says your sleep has been unquiet of late.

Fore. Very likely.

Mrs. Fore. O mighty restless; but I was afraid to tell him so.—He has been subject to talking and starting.

Scan. And did not use to be so?

Mrs. Fore. Never, never, till within these three nights; I cannot say that he has once broken my rest since we have been married.

Fore. I will go to bed.

Scan. Do so, Mr. Foresight, and say your prayers.—He looks better than he did.

Mrs. Fore. Nurse, nurse! [*Calls.*

Fore. Do you think so, Mr. Scandal?

Scan. Yes, yes; I hope this will be gone by morning, taking it in time.

Fore. I hope so.

SCENE XIII.

SCANDAL, FORESIGHT, MRS. FORESIGHT, *and* NURSE.

Mrs. Fore. Nurse, your master is not well; put him to bed.

Scan. I hope you will be able to see Valentine in the morning. You had best take a little diacodion and cowslip-water, and lie upon your back, may be you may dream.

Fore. I thank you, Mr. Scandal, I will.—Nurse, let me have a watch-light, and lay *the Crumbs of Comfort* by me.

Nurse. Yes, sir.

Fore. And—hem, hem! I am very faint.

Scan. No, no; you look much better.

Fore. Do I?—[*To* NURSE.] And, d'ye hear, bring me, let me see—within a quarter of twelve—hem—he, hem!—just upon the turning of the tide, bring me the urinal. And I hope, neither the lord of my ascendant, nor the moon, will be combust; and then I may do well.

Scan. I hope so. Leave that to me; I will erect a scheme; and I hope I shall find both Sol and Venus in the sixth house.

Fore. I thank you, Mr. Scandal; indeed that would be a great comfort to me. Hem, hem! good night.

SCENE XIV.

SCANDAL *and* MRS. FORESIGHT.

Scan. Good night, good Mr. Foresight; and I hope Mars and Venus will be in conjunction, while your wife and I are together.

Mrs. Fore. Well, and what use do you hope to make of this project? you don't think that you are ever like to succeed in your design upon me?

Scan. Yes, faith, I do; I have a better opinion both of you and myself than to despair.

Mrs. Fore. Did you ever hear such a toad? Hark ye, devil! do you think any woman honest?

Scan. Yes, several very honest; they'll cheat a little at cards, sometimes; but that's nothing.

Mrs. Fore. Pshaw! but virtuous, I mean.

Scan. Yes, faith; I believe some women are virtuous too; but 'tis as I believe some men are valiant, through fear. For why should a man court danger, or a woman shun pleasure?

Mrs. Fore. O monstrous! what are conscience and honour?

Scan. Why, honour is a public enemy; and conscience a domestic thief; and he that would secure his pleasure, must pay a tribute to one, and go halves with t'other. As for honour, that you have secured; for you have purchased a perpetual opportunity for pleasure.

Mrs. Fore. An opportunity for pleasure!

Scan. Ay, your husband; a husband is an opportunity for pleasure; so you have taken care of honour, and 'tis the least I can do to take care of conscience.

Mrs. Fore. And so you think we are free for one another.

Scan. Yes, faith, I think so; I love to speak my mind.

Mrs. Fore. Why, then I'll speak my mind. Now, as to this affair between you and me. Here you make love to me; why, I'll confess, it does not displease me. Your person is well enough, and your understanding is not amiss.

Scan. I have no great opinion of myself; but I think I'm neither deformed nor a fool.

Mrs. Fore. But you have a villanous character; you are a libertine in speech as well as practice.

Scan. Come, I know what you would say; you think it more dangerous to be seen in conversation with me, than to allow some other men the last favour. You mistake; the liberty I take in talking is purely affected, for the service of your sex. He that first cries out, *Stop thief!* is often he that has stolen the treasure. I am a juggler, that act by confederacy; and, if you please, we'll put a trick upon the world.

Mrs. Fore. Ay; but you are such a universal juggler, that I'm afraid you have a great many confederates.

Scan. Faith, I'm sound.

Mrs. Fore. O, fy!—I'll swear you're impudent.

Scan. I'll swear you're handsome.

Mrs. Fore. Pish! you'd tell me so, though you did not think so.

Scan. And you'd think so, though I should not tell you so. And now I think we know one another pretty well.

Mrs. Fore. O Lord, who's here?

SCENE XV.

SCANDAL, MRS. FORESIGHT, MRS. FRAIL, *and* BEN.

Ben. Mess, I love to speak my mind; father has nothing to do with me. Nay, I can't say that neither; he has something to do with me. But what does that signify? if so be, that I be'n't minded to be steered by him, 'tis as tho'f he should strive against wind and tide.

Frail. Ay, but, my dear, we must keep it secret till the estate be settled; for you know marrying without an estate is like sailing in a ship without ballast.

Ben. He! he! he! why, that's true; just so for all the world it is indeed, as like as two cable-ropes.

Frail. And though I have a good portion, you know one would not venture all in one bottom.

Ben. Why, that's true again; for mayhap one bottom may spring a leak. You have hit it indeed, mess, you've nicked the channel.

Frail. Well, but if you should forsake me after all, you'd break my heart.

Ben. Break your heart! I'd rather the Mary-gold should break her cable in a storm, as well as I love her. Flesh, you don't think I'm false-hearted like a landman! A sailor will be honest, tho'f mayhap he has never a penny of money in his pocket.—Mayhap I may not have so fair a face as a citizen or a courtier; but for all that, I've as good blood in my veins, and a heart as sound as a biscuit.

Frail. And will you love me always?

Ben. Nay, an I love once, I'll stick like pitch; I'll tell you that. Come, I'll sing you a song of a sailor.

Frail. Hold, there's my sister; I'll call her to hear it.

Mrs. Fore. Well, I won't go to bed to my husband to-night; because I'll retire to my own chamber, and think of what you have said.

Scan. Well; you'll give me leave to wait upon you to your chamber door, and leave you my last instructions?

Mrs. Fore. Hold, here's my sister coming towards us.

Frail. If it won't interrupt you, I'll entertain you with a song.

Ben. The song was made upon one of our ship's crew's wife; our boatswain made the song; mayhap you may know her, sir. Before she was married, she was called buxom Joan of Deptford.

Scan. I have heard of her.

BEN *sings.*

A soldier and a sailor,
A tinker and a tailor,
Had once a doubtful strife, sir,
To make a maid a wife, sir,
　Whose name was buxom Joan.
For now the time was ended,
When she no more intended
To lick her lips at men, sir,
And gnaw the sheets in vain, sir,
　And lie o' nights alone.

The soldier swore like thunder,
He loved her more than plunder;

And show'd her many a scar, sir,
That he had brought from far, sir,
With fighting for her sake.
The tailor thought to please her,
With offering her his measure.
The tinker too with mettle,
Said he could mend her kettle,
And stop up every leak.

But while these three were prating,
The sailor slily waiting,
Thought if it came about, sir,
That they should all fall out, sir,
He then might play his part.
And just e'en as he meant, sir,
To loggerheads they went, sir,
And then he let fly at her
A shot 'twixt wind and water,
That won this fair maid's heart.

If some of our crew that came to see me are not gone, you shall see that we sailors can dance sometimes as well as other folks.—[*Whistles.*] I warrant that brings 'em, an they be within hearing.

Enter Sailors.

Oh, here they be!—and fiddles along with 'em. Come, my lads, let's have a round, and I'll make one.

A Dance.

Ben. We're merry folks, we sailors, we han't much to care for. Thus we live at sea; eat biscuit, and drink flip; put on a clean shirt once a quarter—come home and lie with our landladies once a year, get rid of a little money; and then put off with the next fair wind. How d'ye like us?

Frail. O you are the happiest, merriest men alive!

Mrs. Fore. We're beholden to Mr. Benjamin for this entertainment.—I believe it's late.

Ben. Why, forsooth, an you think so, you had best go to bed. For my part, I mean to toss a can, and remember my sweetheart, afore I turn in; mayhap I may dream of her.

Mrs. Fore. Mr. Scandal, you had best go to bed and dream too.

Scan. Why faith, I have a good lively imagination; and can dream as much to the purpose as another, if I set about it; but dreaming is the poor retreat of a lazy, hopeless, and imperfect lover; 'tis the last glimpse of love to worn-out sinners, and the faint dawning of a bliss to wishing girls and growing boys.

There's nought but willing, waking love that can
Make blest the ripen'd maid and finish'd man.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Valentine's *Lodging*.

Scandal *and* Jeremy.

Scan. Well, is your master ready? does he look madly, and talk madly?

Jer. Yes, sir; you need make no great doubt of that; he that was so near turning poet yesterday morning, can't be much to seek in playing the madman to-day.

Scan. Would he have Angelica acquainted with the reason of his design?

Jer. No, sir, not yet;—he has a mind to try, whether his playing the madman won't make her play the fool, and fall in love with him; or at least own, that she has loved him all this while and concealed it.

Scan. I saw her take coach just now with her maid; and think I heard her bid the coachman drive hither.

Jer. Like enough, sir, for I told her maid this morning my master was run stark mad only for love of her mistress. I hear a coach stop; if it should be she, sir, I believe he would not see her, till he hears how she takes it.

Scan. Well, I'll try her:—'tis she, here she comes.

SCENE II.

Scandal, Jeremy, Angelica, *and* Jenny.

Ang. Mr. Scandal, I suppose you don't think it a novelty to see a woman visit a man at his own lodgings in a morning?

Scan. Not upon a kind occasion, madam. But when a lady comes tyrannically to insult a ruined lover, and make manifest the cruel triumphs of her beauty; the barbarity of it something surprises me.

Ang. I don't like raillery from a serious face.—Pray tell me what is the matter?

Jer. No strange matter, madam; my master's mad, that's all: I suppose your ladyship has thought him so a great while.

Ang. How d'ye mean, mad?

Jer. Why, faith, madam, he's mad for want of his wits, just as he was poor for want of money; his head is e'en as light as his pockets; and anybody that has a mind to a bad bargain, can't do better than to beg him for his estate.

Ang. If you speak truth, your endeavouring at wit is very unseasonable.

Scan. [*Aside.*] She's concerned, and loves him.

Ang. Mr. Scandal, you cannot think me guilty of so much inhumanity, as not to be concerned for a man I must own myself obliged to; pray tell me the truth.

Scan. Faith, madam, I wish telling a lie would mend the matter. But this is no new effect of an unsuccessful passion.

Ang. [*Aside.*] I know not what to think.—Yet I should be vexed to have a trick put upon me.—[*Aloud.*] May I not see him?

Scan. I'm afraid the physician is not willing you should see him yet.—Jeremy, go in and inquire.

SCENE III.

SCANDAL, ANGELICA, *and* JENNY.

Ang. [*Aside.*] Ha! I saw him wink and smile—I fancy 'tis a trick—I'll try.—[*Aloud.*] I would disguise to all the world a failing which I must own to you.—I fear my happiness depends upon the recovery of Valentine. Therefore I conjure you, as you are his friend, and as you have compassion upon one fearful of affliction, to tell me what I am to hope for.—I cannot speak—but you may tell me, for you know what I would ask.

Scan. [*Aside.*] So, this is pretty plain.—[*Aloud.*] Be not too much concerned, madam, I hope his condition is not desperate: an acknowledgment of love from you, perhaps, may work a cure; as the fear of your aversion occasioned his distemper.

Ang. [*Aside.*] Say you so? nay, then I'm convinced; and if I don't play trick for trick, may I never taste the pleasure of revenge!—[*Aloud.*] Acknowledgment of love! I find you have mistaken my compassion, and think me guilty of a weakness I'm a stranger to. But I have too much sincerity to deceive you, and too much charity to suffer him to be deluded with vain hopes. Good-nature and humanity oblige me to be concerned for him; but to love is neither in my power nor inclination; and if he can't be cured without I suck the poison from his wounds, I'm afraid he won't recover his senses till I lose mine.

Scan. [*Aside.*] Hey, brave woman, i'faith!—[*Aloud.*] Won't you see him then, if he desire it?

Ang. What signify a madman's desires? besides, 'twould make me uneasy. If I don't see him, perhaps my concern for him may lessen. If I forget him, 'tis no more than he has done by himself; and now the surprise is over, methinks I am not half so sorry as I was.

Scan. So, faith, good-nature works apace; you were confessing just now an obligation to his love.

Ang. But I have considered that passions are unreasonable and involuntary; if he loves, he can't help it; and if I don't love, I can't help it; no more than he can help his being a man, or I my being a woman; or no more than I can help my want of inclination to stay longer here.—Come, Jenny.

SCENE IV.

SCANDAL *and* JEREMY.

Scan. Humph!—An admirable composition, faith, this same womankind!

Jer. What, is she gone, sir?

Scan. Gone? why she was never here; nor anywhere else; nor I don't know her if I see her; nor you neither.

Jer. Good lack! what's the matter now? are any more of us to be mad? Why, sir, my master longs to see her; and is almost mad in good earnest with the joyful news of her being here.

Scan. We are all under a mistake. Ask no questions, for I can't resolve you; but I'll inform your master. In the mean time, if our project succeed no better with his father than it does with his mistress, he may descend from his exaltation of madness into the road of common sense, and be content only to be made a fool with other reasonable people.—I hear sir Sampson. You know your cue; I'll to your master.

SCENE V.

JEREMY, SIR SAMPSON, *and* BUCKRAM.

Sir Samp. D'ye see, Mr. Buckram, here's the paper signed with his own hand.

Buck. Good, sir. And the conveyance is ready drawn in this box, if he be ready to sign and seal.

Sir Samp. Ready, body o' me, he must be ready! his sham-sickness shan't excuse him.—O, here's his scoundrel.—Sirrah, where's your master?

Jer. Ah, sir, he's quite gone.

Sir Samp. Gone! what, he is not dead?

Jer. No, sir, not dead.

Sir Samp. What, is he gone out of town? run away, ha! has he tricked me? speak, varlet.

Jer. No, no, sir, he's safe enough, sir, an he were but as sound, poor gentleman. He is, indeed, here, sir, and not here, sir.

Sir Samp. Heyday, rascal, do you banter me? sirrah, d'ye banter me?—Speak, sirrah, where is he? for I will find him.

Jer. Would you could, sir! for he has lost himself. Indeed, sir, I have almost broke my heart about him—I can't refrain tears when I think of him, sir: I'm as melancholy for him as a passing-bell, sir; or a horse in a pound.

Sir Samp. A pox confound your similitudes, sir!—Speak to be understood, and tell me in plain terms what the matter is with him, or I'll crack your fool's scull.

Jer. Ah, you've hit it, sir! that's the matter with him, sir; his scull's cracked, poor gentleman! he's stark mad, sir.

Sir Samp. Mad!

Buck. What, is he *non compos?*

Jer. Quite *non compos*, sir.

Buck. Why, then all's obliterated, sir Sampson; if he be *non compos mentis*, his act and deed will be of no effect, it is not good in law.

Sir Samp. 'Oons, I won't believe it! let me see him, sir.—Mad! I'll make him find his senses.

Jer. Mr. Scandal is with him, sir; I'll knock at the door. [*Goes to the Scene, which opens.*

SCENE VI.

SIR SAMPSON, VALENTINE, SCANDAL, JEREMY, *and* BUCKRAM. VALENTINE *upon a couch, disorderly dressed.*

Sir Samp. How now! what's here to do?

Val. Ha! who's that?

Scan. For heaven's sake softly, sir, and gently! don't provoke him.

Val. Answer me, who is that, and that?

Sir Samp. Gadsbobs, does he not know me? Is he mischievous? I'll speak gently.—Val, Val, dost thou not know me, boy? not know thy own father, Val? I am thy own father, and this is honest Brief Buckram the lawyer.

Val. It may be so—I did not know you—the world is full.—There are people that we do know,

and people that we do not know; and yet the sun shines upon all alike.—There are fathers that have many children; and there are children that have many fathers.—'Tis strange! but I am Truth, and come to give the world the lie.

Sir Samp. Body o'me, I know not what to say to him!

Val. Why does that lawyer wear black?—does he carry his conscience withoutside?—Lawyer, what art thou? dost thou know me?

Buck. O Lord! what must I say?—Yes, sir.

Val. Thou liest, for I am Truth. 'Tis hard I cannot get a livelihood amongst you. I have been sworn out of Westminster-hall the first day of every term—let me see—no matter how long—but I'll tell you one thing; it's a question that would puzzle an arithmetician, if you should ask him, whether the Bible saves more souls in Westminster-Abbey, or damns more in Westminster-Hall; for my part, I am Truth, and can't tell; I have very few acquaintance.

Sir Samp. Body o'me, he talks sensibly in his madness! has he no intervals?

Jer. Very short, sir.

Buck. Sir, I can do you no service while he's in this condition; here's your paper, sir—he may do me a mischief if I stay—the conveyance is ready, sir, if he recover his senses.

SCENE VII.

Sir Sampson, Valentine, Scandal, *and* Jeremy.

Sir Samp. Hold, hold, hold, don't you go yet.

Scan. You'd better let him go, sir; and send for him if there be occasion; for I fancy his presence provokes him more.

Val. Is the lawyer gone? 'tis well; then we may drink about without going together by the ears—heigh-ho! What o'clock is 't?—My father here! your blessing, sir.

Sir Samp. He recovers.—Bless thee, Val,—how dost thou do, boy?

Val. Thank you, sir, pretty well—I have been a little out of order—won't you please to sit, sir?

Sir Samp. Ay, boy.—Come, thou shalt sit down by me.

Val. Sir, 'tis my duty to wait.

Sir Samp. No, no, come, come, sit thee down, honest Val; how dost thou do? let me feel thy pulse.—Oh, pretty well now, Val; body o' me, I was sorry to see thee indisposed! but I'm glad thou art better, honest Val.

Val. I thank you, sir.

Scan. Miracle! the monster grows loving. [*Aside.*

Sir Samp. Let me feel thy hand again, Val; it does not shake—I believe thou canst write, Val; ha, boy, thou canst write thy name, Val?—Jeremy, step and overtake Mr. Buckram, bid him make haste back with the conveyance; quick! quick!

[*Whispers* Jeremy, *who goes out.*

SCENE VIII.

Sir Sampson, Valentine, *and* Scandal.

Scan. That ever I should suspect such a heathen of any remorse! [*Aside.*

Sir Samp. Dost thou know this paper, Val? I know thou'rt honest, and wilt perform articles.

[*Shows him the paper, but holds it out of his reach.*

Val. Pray, let me see it, sir. You hold it so far off, that I can't tell whether I know it or no.

Sir Samp. See it, boy? ay, ay, why thou dost see it—'tis thy own hand, Vally. Why, let me see, I can read it as plain as can be; look you here—[*Reads.*] *The condition of this obligation*—look you, as plain as can be, so it begins—and then at the bottom—*As witness my hand*, VALENTINE LEGEND, in great letters; why, 'tis as plain as the nose in one's face; what, are my eyes better than thine? I believe I can read it farther off yet—let me see. [*Stretches his arm as far as he can.*

Val. Will you please to let me hold it, sir?

Sir Samp. Let thee hold it, sayest thou?—ay, with all my heart.—What matter is it who holds it? what need anybody hold it?—I'll put it up in my pocket, Val, and then nobody need hold it.—[*Puts the paper in his pocket.*] There, Val, it's safe enough, boy—but thou shalt have it as soon as thou hast set thy hand to another paper, little Val.

SCENE IX.

Sir Sampson, Valentine, Scandal, Jeremy, *and* Buckram.

Val. What, is my bad genius here again! Oh no, it is the lawyer with an itching palm; and he's come to be scratched—my nails are not long enough—let me have a pair of red-hot tongs, quickly! quickly! and you shall see me act St. Dunstan, and lead the devil by the nose.

Buck. O Lord, let me be gone! I'll not venture myself with a madman.

SCENE X.

Sir Sampson, Valentine, Scandal, *and* Jeremy.

Val. Ha! ha! ha! you need not run so fast, honesty will not overtake you.—Ha! ha! ha! the rogue found me out to be *in forma pauperis* presently.

Sir Samp. Oons! what a vexation is here! I know not what to do or say, or which way to go.

Val. Who's that, that's out of his way! I am Truth, and can set him right.—Hark ye, friend, the straight road is the worst way you can go:—he that follows his nose always, will very often be led into a stink.—*Probatum est.*—But what are you for, religion or politics? There's a couple of topics for you, no more like one another than oil and vinegar; and yet those two beaten together by a state-cook, make sauce for the whole nation.

Sir Samp. What the devil had I to do, ever to beget sons? why did I ever marry?

Val. Because thou wert a monster, old boy; the two greatest monsters in the world are a man and a woman; what's thy opinion?

Sir Samp. Why, my opinion is that those two monsters joined together, make yet a greater, that's a man and his wife.

Val. Aha, old truepenny! sayest thou so? thou hast nicked it. — But, it's wonderful strange, Jeremy.

Jer. What is, sir?

Val. That grey hairs should cover a green head, and I make a fool of my father.—What's here! *Erra Pater*, or a bearded Sibyl? If Prophecy comes, Truth must give place.

SCENE XI.

Sir Sampson, Scandal, Foresight, Mrs. Foresight, *and* Mrs. Frail.

Fore. What says he? what, did he prophesy?—Ha, sir Sampson, bless us! how are we?

Sir Samp. Are we! a pox o' your prognostication—why, we are fools as we use to be.—Oons, that you could not foresee that the moon would predominate, and my son be mad!—Where's your oppositions, your trines, and your quadrates?—What did your Cardan and your Ptolemy tell you? your Messahalah and your Longomontanus, your harmony of chiromancy with astrology? Ah! pox on't, that I that know the world, and men and manners, that don't believe a syllable in the sky and stars, and sun and almanacs, and trash, should be directed by a dreamer, an omen-hunter, and defer business in expectation of a lucky hour! when, body o' me, there never was a lucky hour after the first opportunity.

SCENE XII.

Scandal, Foresight, Mrs. Foresight, *and* Mrs. Frail.

Fore. Ah, sir Sampson, Heaven help your head! This is none of your lucky hour; *Nemo omnibus horis sapit.* What, is he gone, and in contempt of science? Ill stars and unconvertible ignorance attend him!

Scan. You must excuse his passion, Mr. Foresight; for he has been heartily vexed.—His son is *non compos mentis*, and thereby incapable of making any conveyance in law; so that all his measures are disappointed.

Fore. Ha! say you so?

Frail. What, has my sea-lover lost his anchor of hope then? [*Aside to* Mrs. Foresight.

Mrs. Fore. Oh, sister, what will you do with him?

Frail. Do with him! send him to sea again in the next foul weather.—He's used to an inconstant element, and won't be surprised to see the tide turned.

Fore. Wherein was I mistaken, not to foresee this? [*Considers.*

Scan. Madam, you and I can tell him something else that he did not foresee, and more particularly relating to his own fortune. [*Aside to* Mrs. Foresight.

Mrs. Fore. What do you mean? I don't understand you.

Scan. Hush, softly—the pleasures of last night, my dear; too considerable to be forgot so soon.

Mrs. Fore. Last night! and what would your impudence infer from last night! last night was like the night before, I think.

Scan. 'Sdeath, do you make no difference between me and your husband?

Mrs. Fore. Not much;—he's superstitious, and you are mad, in my opinion.

Scan. You make me mad.—You are not serious;—pray, recollect yourself.

Mrs. Fore. O yes, now I remember, you were very impertinent and impudent,—and would have come to bed to me.

Scan. And did not?

Mrs. Fore. Did not! with what face can you ask the question?

Scan. [*Aside.*] This I have heard of before, but never believed. I have been told she had that admirable quality of forgetting to a man's face in the morning that she had lain with him all night, and denying that she had done favours with more impudence than she could grant 'em.—Madam, I'm your humble servant, and honour you.—[*Aloud.*] You look pretty well, Mr. Foresight.—How did you rest last night?

Fore. Truly, Mr. Scandal, I was so taken up with broken dreams and distracted visions, that I remember little.

Scan. 'Twas a very forgetting night.—But would you not talk with Valentine, perhaps you may understand him? I'm apt to believe there is something mysterious in his discourses, and sometimes rather think him inspired than mad.

Fore. You speak with singular good judgment, Mr. Scandal, truly.—I am inclining to your Turkish opinion in this matter, and do reverence a man whom the vulgar think mad. Let us go to him.

Frail. Sister, do you stay with them; I'll find out my lover, and give him his discharge, and come to you.—O' my conscience here he comes.

SCENE XIII.

Mrs. Frail *and* Ben.

Ben. All mad, I think.—Flesh, I believe all the calentures of the sea are come ashore, for my part!

Frail. Mr. Benjamin in choler!

Ben. No, I'm pleased well enough now I have found you.—Mess, I have had such a hurricane upon your account yonder!

Frail. My account! pray what's the matter?

Ben. Why, father came and found me squabbling with yon chitty-faced thing as he would have me marry,—so he asked what was the matter.—He asked in a surly sort of a way.—It seems brother Val is gone mad, and so that put'n into a passion; but what did I know that, what's that to me?—So he asked in a surly sort of manner,—and gad I answered 'en as surlily; what tho'f he be my father? I an't bound prentice to 'en:—so faith I told'n in plain terms, if I were minded to marry I'd marry to please myself, not him: and for the young woman that he provided for me, I thought it more fitting for her to learn her sampler and make dirt-pies, than to look after a husband; for my part I was none of her man.—I had another voyage to make, let him take it as he will.

Frail. So then, you intend to go to sea again?

Ben. Nay, nay, my mind run upon you,—but I would not tell him so much.—So he said he'd make my heart ache; and if so be that he could get a woman to his mind, he'd marry himself. Gad, says I, an you play the fool and marry at these

years, there's more danger of your head's aching than my heart.—He was woundy angry when I gav'n that wipe.—He hadn't a word to say, and so I left'n and the green girl together; mayhap the bee may bite, and he'll marry her himself; with all my heart.

Frail. And were you this undutiful and graceless wretch to your father?

Ben. Then why was he graceless first?—If I am undutiful and graceless, why did he beget me so? I did not get myself.

Frail. O impiety! how have I been mistaken! what an inhuman merciless creature have I set my heart upon! O I am happy to have discovered the shelves and quicksands that lurk beneath that faithless smiling face!

Ben. Hey toss! what's the matter now? why, you ben't angry, be you?

Frail. O see me no more!—for thou wert born amongst rocks, suckled by whales, cradled in a tempest, and whistled to by winds; and thou art come forth with fins and scales, and three rows of teeth, a most outrageous fish of prey.

Ben. O Lord, O Lord, she's mad! poor young woman; love has turned her senses, her brain is quite overset! Well-a-day, how shall I do to set her to rights?

Frail. No, no, I am not mad, monster, I am wise enough to find you out. Hadst thou the impudence to aspire at being a husband with that stubborn and disobedient temper?—You that know not how to submit to a father, presume to have a sufficient stock of duty to undergo a wife? I should have been finely fobbed indeed, very finely fobbed.

Ben. Hark ye, forsooth; if so be that you are in your right senses, d'ye see; for aught as I perceive I'm like to be finely fobbed,—if I have got anger here upon your account, and you are tacked about already.—What d'ye mean, after all your fair speeches and stroking my cheeks, and kissing and hugging, what, would you sheer off so? would you, and leave me aground?

Frail. No, I'll leave you adrift, and go which way you will.

Ben. What, are you false-hearted, then?

Frail. Only the wind's changed.

Ben. More shame for you:—the wind's changed! It's an ill wind blows nobody good,—mayhap I have a good riddance on you, if these be your tricks. What did you mean all this while, to make a fool of me?

Frail. Any fool but a husband.

Ben. Husband! gad, I would not be your husband, if you would have me, now I know your mind, tho'f you had your weight in gold and jewels, and tho'f I loved you never so well.

Frail. Why, canst thou love, porpoise?

Ben. No matter what I can do; don't call names,—I don't love you so well as to bear that, whatever I did. I'm glad you show yourself, mistress.—Let them marry you, as don't know you:—gad, I know you too well, by sad experience; I believe he that marries you will go to sea in a hen-pecked frigate—I believe that, young woman—and mayhap may come to an anchor at Cuckold's-point; so there's a dash for you, take it as you will, mayhap you may holla after me when I won't come to. [*Exit.*

Frail. Ha! ha! ha! no doubt on't;—

My true love is gone to sea— [*Sings.*

SCENE XIV.

MRS. FRAIL *and* MRS. FORESIGHT.

Frail. O sister, had you come a minute sooner, you would have seen the resolution of a lover.—Honest Tar and I are parted,—and with the same indifference that we met.—O' my life I am half vexed at the insensibility of a brute that I despised.

Mrs. Fore. What, then, he bore it most heroically?

Frail. Most tyrannically,—for you see he has got the start of me; and I the poor forsaken maid am left complaining on the shore. But I'll tell you a hint that he has given me; sir Sampson is enraged, and talks desperately of committing matrimony himself;—if he has a mind to throw himself away, he can't do it more effectually than upon me, if we could bring it about.

Mrs. Fore. Oh, hang him, old fox! he's too cunning; besides he hates both you and me. But I have a project in my head for you, and I have gone a good way towards it. I have almost made a bargain with Jeremy, Valentine's man, to sell his master to us.

Frail. Sell him! how?

Mrs. Fore. Valentine raves upon Angelica, and took me for her, and Jeremy says will take anybody for her that he imposes on him. Now I have promised him mountains, if in one of his mad fits he will bring you to him in her stead, and get you married together, and put to bed together; and after consummation, girl, there's no revoking. And if he should recover his senses, he'll be glad at least to make you a good settlement.—Here they come: stand aside a little, and tell me how you like the design.

SCENE XV.

MRS. FORESIGHT, MRS. FRAIL, VALENTINE, SCANDAL, FORESIGHT, *and* JEREMY.

Scan. And have you given your master a hint of their plot upon him? [*To* JEREMY.

Jer. Yes, sir; he says he'll favour it, and mistake her for Angelica.

Scan. It may make us sport.

Fore. Mercy on us!

Val. Hush!—interrupt me not: I'll whisper prediction to thee, and thou shalt prophesy. I am Truth, and can teach thy tongue a new trick:—I have told thee what's past—now I'll tell what's to come. Dost thou know what will happen to-morrow?—answer me not—for I will tell thee. To-morrow, knaves will thrive through craft, and fools through fortune, and honesty will go as it did, frost-nipped in a summer suit. Ask me questions concerning to-morrow.

Scan. Ask him, Mr. Foresight.

Fore. Pray, what will be done at court?

Val. Scandal will tell you:—I am Truth, I never come there.

Fore. In the city?

Val. Oh, prayers will be said in empty churches, at the usual hours. Yet you will see such zealous faces behind counters, as if religion were to be sold in every shop. Oh, things will go methodically in

the city; the clocks will strike twelve at noon, and the horned herd buzz in the Exchange at two. Husbands and wives will drive distinct trades, and care and pleasure separately occupy the family. Coffee-houses will be full of smoke and stratagem. And the cropt prentice, that sweeps his master's shop in the morning, may, ten to one, dirty his sheets before night. But there are two things that you will see very strange; which are wanton wives with their legs at liberty, and tame cuckolds with chains about their necks.—But hold, I must examine you before I go further; you look suspiciously. Are you a husband?

Fore. I am married.

Val. Poor creature! is your wife of Covent-garden parish?

Fore. No; St. Martin's-in-the-fields.

Val. Alas, poor man! his eyes are sunk, and his hands shrivelled; his legs dwindled, and his back bowed; pray, pray, for a metamorphosis. Change thy shape, and shake off age; get thee Medea's kettle, and be boiled anew; come forth with labouring callous hands, a chine of steel, and Atlas' shoulders. Let Taliacotius trim the calves of twenty chairmen, and make thee pedestals to stand erect upon, and look matrimony in the face. Ha! ha! ha! that a man should have a stomach to a wedding supper, when the pigeons ought rather to be laid to his feet, ha! ha! ha!

Fore. His frenzy is very high now, Mr. Scandal.

Scan. I believe it is a spring-tide.

Fore. Very likely, truly; you understand these matters;—Mr. Scandal, I shall be very glad to confer with you about these things which he has uttered—his sayings are very mysterious and hieroglyphical.

Val. Oh, why would Angelica be absent from my eyes so long?

Jer. She's here, sir!

Mrs. Fore. Now, sister.

Frail. O Lord, what must I say?

Scan. Humour him, madam, by all means.

Val. Where is she? oh, I see her;—she comes like riches, health, and liberty at once, to a despairing, starving, and abandoned wretch. Oh welcome, welcome.

Frail. How d'ye, sir? can I serve you?

Val. Hark ye—I have a secret to tell you—Endymion and the moon shall meet us upon mount Latmos, and we'll be married in the dead of night—but say not a word. Hymen shall put his torch into a dark lantern, that it may be secret; and Juno shall give her peacock poppy-water, that he may fold his ogling tail, and Argus's hundred eyes be shut, ha! Nobody shall know but Jeremy.

Frail. No, no, we'll keep it secret, it shall be done presently.

Val. The sooner the better.—Jeremy, come hither—closer—that none may overhear us—Jeremy, I can tell you news; Angelica is turned nun, and I am turning friar, and yet we'll marry one another in spite of the pope. Get me a cowl and beads, that I may play my part; for she'll meet me two hours hence in black and white, and a long veil to cover the project, and we won't see one another's faces, till we have done something to be ashamed of, and then we'll blush once for all.

SCENE XVI.

MRS. FORESIGHT, MRS. FRAIL, VALENTINE, SCANDAL, FORESIGHT, JEREMY, TATTLE, *and* ANGELICA.

Jer. I'll take care, and—

Val. Whisper.

Ang. Nay, Mr. Tattle, if you make love to me, you spoil my design, for I intend to make you my confidant.

Tat. But, madam, to throw away your person, such a person, and such a fortune, on a madman?

Ang. I never loved him till he was mad; but don't tell anybody so.

Scan. [*Aside.*] How's this! Tattle making love to Angelica?

Tat. Tell, madam! alas, you don't know me—I have much ado to tell your ladyship how long I have been in love with you; but encouraged by the impossibility of Valentine's making any more addresses to you, I have ventured to declare the very inmost passion of my heart. Oh, madam, look upon us both; there you see the ruins of a poor decayed creature,—here a complete and lively figure, with youth and health, and all his five senses in perfection, madam; and to all this, the most passionate lover—

Ang. O fy, for shame! hold your tongue; a passionate lover and five senses in perfection! when you are as mad as Valentine, I'll believe you love me, and the maddest shall take me.

Val. It is enough.—Ha, who's here?

Frail. O Lord, her coming will spoil all!

[*Aside to* JEREMY.

Jer. [*Aside to* MRS. FRAIL.] No, no, madam, he won't know her; if he should, I can persuade him.

Val. Scandal, who are these? foreigners? If they are, I'll tell you what I think.—[*Whispers.*] Get away all the company but Angelica, that I may discover my design to her.

Scan. [*Whispers.*] I will; I have discovered something of Tattle that is of a piece with Mrs. Frail. He courts Angelica; if we could contrive to couple 'em together; hark ye.

Mrs. Fore. He won't know you, cousin, he knows nobody.

Fore. But he knows more than anybody. Oh, niece, he knows things past and to come, and all the profound secrets of time.

Tat. Look you, Mr. Foresight, it is not my way to make many words of matters, and so I shan't say much; but, in short, d'ye see, I will hold you a hundred pounds now, that I know more secrets than he.

Fore. How! I cannot read that knowledge in your face, Mr. Tattle. Pray, what do you know?

Tat. Why, d'ye think I'll tell you, sir? Read it in my face! no, sir, 'tis written in my heart; and safer there, sir, than letters writ in juice of lemon; for no fire can fetch it out. I am no blab, sir.

Val. [*Aside to* SCANDAL.] Acquaint Jeremy with it, he may easily bring it about.—[*Aloud.*] They are welcome, and I'll tell 'em so myself. What, do you look strange upon me? then I must be plain.—[*Coming up to them.*] I am Truth, and hate an old acquaintance with a new face.

[SCANDAL *goes aside with* JEREMY.

Tat. Do you know me, Valentine?

Val. You? who are you? no, I hope not.

Tat. I am Jack Tattle, your friend.

Val. My friend? what to do? I am no married man, and thou canst not lie with my wife; I am very poor, and thou canst not borrow money of me; then what employment have I for a friend?

Tat. Ha! a good open speaker, and not to be trusted with a secret.

Ang. Do you know me, Valentine?

Val. Oh, very well.

Ang. Who am I?

Val. You're a woman,—one to whom heaven gave beauty, when it grafted roses on a briar. You are the reflection of heaven in a pond, and he that leaps at you is sunk. You are all white, a sheet of lovely, spotless paper, when you first are born; but you are to be scrawled and blotted by every goose's quill. I know you; for I loved a woman, and loved her so long, that I found out a strange thing; I found out what a woman was good for.

Tat. Ay, prithee, what's that?

Val. Why, to keep a secret.

Tat. O Lord!

Val. O, exceeding good to keep a secret: for though she should tell, yet she is not to be believed.

Tat. Ha! good again, faith.

Val. I would have music.—Sing me the song that I like.

SONG.

I tell thee, Charmion, could I time retrieve,
And could again begin to love and live,
To you I should my earliest offering give;
I know, my eyes would lead my heart to you,
And I should all my vows and oaths renew;
But, to be plain, I never would be true.

For by our weak and weary truth I find,
Love hates to centre in a point assign'd;
But runs with joy the circle of the mind:
Then never let us chain what should be free,
But for relief of either sex agree:
Since women love to change, and so do we.

No more, for I am melancholy. [*Walks musing.*

Jer. I'll do't, sir. [*Aside to* SCANDAL.

Scan. Mr. Foresight, we had best leave him. He may grow outrageous, and do mischief.

Fore. I will be directed by you.

Jer. [*Aside to* MRS. FRAIL.] You'll meet, madam? I'll take care everything shall be ready.

Frail. Thou shalt do what thou wilt; in short, I will deny thee nothing.

Tat. Madam, shall I wait upon you? [*To* ANGELICA.

Ang. No, I'll stay with him; Mr. Scandal will protect me.—Aunt, Mr. Tattle desires you would give him leave to wait on you.

Tat. [*Aside.*] Pox on't! there's no coming off, now she has said that.—[*Aloud.*] Madam, will you do me the honour?

Mrs. Fore. Mr. Tattle might have used less ceremony.

Scan. Jeremy, follow Tattle.

SCENE XVII.

ANGELICA, VALENTINE, *and* SCANDAL.

Ang. Mr. Scandal, I only stay till my maid comes, and because I had a mind to be rid of Mr. Tattle.

Scan. Madam, I am very glad that I overheard a better reason, which you gave to Mr. Tattle; for his impertinence forced you to acknowledge a kindness for Valentine which you denied to all his sufferings and my solicitations. So I'll leave him to make use of the discovery, and your ladyship to the free confession of your inclinations.

Ang. Oh heavens! you won't leave me alone with a madman?

Scan. No, madam, I only leave a madman to his remedy.

SCENE XVIII.

ANGELICA *and* VALENTINE.

Val. Madam, you need not be very much afraid, for I fancy I begin to come to myself.

Ang. [*Aside.*] Ay, but if I don't fit you, I'll be hanged.

Val. You see what disguises love makes us put on: gods have been in counterfeited shapes for the same reason; and the divine part of me, my mind, has worn this mask of madness, and this motley livery, only as the slave of love, and menial creature of your beauty.

Ang. Mercy on me, how he talks! poor Valentine!

Val. Nay, faith, now let us understand one another, hypocrisy apart.—The comedy draws toward an end, and let us think of leaving acting, and be ourselves; and since you have loved me, you must own, I have at length deserved you should confess it.

Ang. [*Sighs.*] I would I had loved you!—for Heaven knows I pity you; and could I have foreseen the bad effects, I would have striven; but that's too late. [*Sighs.*

Val. What bad effects?—what's too late? My seeming madness has deceived my father, and procured me time to think of means to reconcile me to him, and preserve the right of my inheritance to his estate; which otherwise by articles I must this morning have resigned: and this I had informed you of to-day, but you were gone, before I knew you had been here.

Ang. How! I thought your love of me had caused this transport in your soul; which it seems you only counterfeited, for mercenary ends and sordid interest!

Val. Nay, now you do me wrong; for if any interest was considered it was yours; since I thought I wanted more than love to make me worthy of you.

Ang. Then you thought me mercenary.—But how am I deluded by this interval of sense, to reason with a madman!

Val. Oh, 'tis barbarous to misunderstand me longer!

SCENE XIX.

VALENTINE, ANGELICA, *and* JEREMY.

Ang. Oh, here's a reasonable creature—sure he will not have the impudence to persevere.—Come, Jeremy, acknowledge your trick, and confess your master's madness counterfeit.

Jer. Counterfeit, madam! I'll maintain him to be as absolutely and substantially mad as any free-

holder in Bethlehem; nay, he's as mad as any projector, fanatic, chemist, lover, or poet in Europe.

Val. Sirrah, you lie! I am not mad.

Ang. Ha! ha! ha! you see he denies it.

Jer. O Lord, madam, did you ever know any madman mad enough to own it?

Val. Sot, can't you apprehend?

Ang. Why, he talked very sensible just now.

Jer. Yes, madam, he has intervals; but you see he begins to look wild again now.

Val. Why, you thick-skulled rascal, I tell you the farce is done, and I will be mad no longer. [*Beats him.*

Ang. Ha! ha! ha! is he mad or no, Jeremy?

Jer. Partly I think—for he does not know his own mind two hours.—I'm sure I left him just now in the humour to be mad; and I think I have not found him very quiet at this present!—[*Knocking at the door.*] Who's there?

Val. Go see, you sot.—[*Exit* JEREMY.] I'm very glad that I can move your mirth, though not your compassion.

Ang. I did not think you had apprehension enough to be exceptious: but madmen show themselves most, by over-pretending to a sound understanding; as drunken men do by over-acting sobriety. I was half-inclining to believe you, till I accidentally touched upon your tender part; but now you have restored me to my former opinion and compassion.

Re-enter JEREMY.

Jer. Sir, your father has sent to know if you are any better yet.—Will you please to be mad, sir, or how?

Val. Stupidity! you know the penalty of all I'm worth must pay for the confession of my senses; I'm mad, and will be mad to everybody but this lady.

Jer. So;—Just the very backside of truth.—But lying is a figure in speech, that interlards the greatest part of my conversation.—Madam, your ladyship's woman.

SCENE XX.

ANGELICA, VALENTINE, *and* JENNY.

Ang. Well, have you been there?—Come hither.

Jen. [*Aside to* ANGELICA.] Yes, madam, sir Sampson will wait upon you presently.

Val. You are not leaving me in this uncertainty?

Ang. Would anything but a madman complain of uncertainty? Uncertainty and expectation are the joys of life. Security is an insipid thing, and the overtaking and possessing of a wish, discovers the folly of the chase. Never let us know one another better: for the pleasure of a masquerade is done, when we come to show our faces; but I'll tell you two things before I leave you; I am not the fool you take me for; and you are mad, and don't know it.

SCENE XXI.

VALENTINE *and* JEREMY.

Val. From a riddle you can expect nothing but a riddle. There's my instruction, and the moral of my lesson.

Jer. What, is the lady gone again, sir? I hope you understood one another before she went?

Val. Understood! she is harder to be understood than a piece of Egyptian antiquity, or an Irish manuscript; you may pore till you spoil your eyes, and not improve your knowledge.

Jer. I have heard 'em say, sir, they read hard Hebrew books backwards; may be you begin to read at the wrong end.

Val. They say so of a witch's prayer: and dreams and Dutch almanacs are to be understood by contraries. But there's regularity and method in that; she is a medal without a reverse or inscription, for indifference has both sides alike. Yet while she does not seem to hate me, I will pursue her, and know her if it be possible, in spite of the opinion of my satirical friend, Scandal, who says,

That women are like tricks by sleight of hand,
Which, to admire, we should not understand.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* FORESIGHT'S *House.*

ANGELICA *and* JENNY.

Ang. Where is sir Sampson? did you not tell me he would be here before me?

Jen. He's at the great glass in the dining-room, madam, setting his cravat and wig.

Ang. How! I'm glad on't.—If he has a mind I should like him, it's a sign he likes me; and that's more than half my design.

Jen. I hear him, madam.

Ang. Leave me; and d'ye hear, if Valentine should come or send, I am not to be spoken with.

SCENE II.

ANGELICA *and* SIR SAMPSON.

Sir Samp. I have not been honoured with the commands of a fair lady, a great while:—odd, madam, you have revived me!—not since I was five-and-thirty.

Ang. Why, you have no great reason to complain, sir Sampson, that is not long ago.

Sir Samp. Zooks, but it is, madam, a very great while, to a man that admires a fine woman as much as I do.

Ang. You're an absolute courtier, sir Sampson.

Sir Samp. Not at all, madam; odsbud you wrong me; I am not so old neither to be a bare

courtier, only a man of words: odd, I have warm blood about me yet, and can serve a lady any way.—Come, come, let me tell you, you women think a man old too soon, faith and troth, you do!—Come, don't despise fifty; odd, fifty, in a hale constitution, is no such contemptible age.

Ang. Fifty a contemptible age! not at all, a very fashionable age, I think.—I assure you, I know very considerable beaux that set a good face upon fifty:—fifty! I have seen fifty in a side-box, by candle-light, out-blossom five-and-twenty.

Sir Samp. Outsides, outsides; a pize take 'em, mere outsides! hang your side-box beaux! no, I'm none of those, none of your forced trees, that pretend to blossom in the fall, and bud when they should bring forth fruit; I am of a long-lived race, and inherit vigour: none of my ancestors married till fifty; yet they begot sons and daughters till fourscore; I am of your patriarchs, I, a branch of one of your antediluvian families, fellows that the flood could not wash away. Well, madam, what are your commands? has any young rogue affronted you, and shall I cut his throat? or—

Ang. No, sir Sampson, I have no quarrel upon my hands—I have more occasion for your conduct than your courage at this time. To tell you the truth, I'm weary of living single, and want a husband.

Sir Samp. Odsbud, and 'tis pity you should!—[*Aside.*] Odd, would she would like me, then I should hamper my young rogues: odd, would she would; faith and troth she's devilish handsome!—[*Aloud.*] Madam, you deserve a good husband, and 'twere pity you should be thrown away upon any of these young idle rogues about the town. Odd, there's ne'er a young fellow worth hanging!—that is a very young fellow.—Pize on 'em! they never think beforehand of anything;—and if they commit matrimony, 'tis as they commit murder; out of a frolic, and are ready to hang themselves, or to be hanged by the law, the next morning:—odso, have a care, madam.

Ang. Therefore I ask your advice, sir Sampson: I have fortune enough to make any man easy that I can like; if there were such a thing as a young agreeable man with a reasonable stock of good-nature and sense.—For I would neither have an absolute wit nor a fool.

Sir Samp. Odd, you are hard to please, madam; to find a young fellow that is neither a wit in his own eye, nor a fool in the eye of the world, is a very hard task. But, faith and troth, you speak very discreetly; for I hate both a wit and a fool.

Ang. She that marries a fool, sir Sampson, forfeits the reputation of her honesty or understanding: and she that marries a very witty man is a slave to the severity and insolent conduct of her husband. I should like a man of wit for a lover, because I would have such a one in my power; but I would no more be his wife than his enemy. For his malice is not a more terrible consequence of his aversion than his jealousy is of his love.

Sir Samp. None of old Foresight's Sibyls ever uttered such a truth. Odsbud, you have won my heart! I hate a wit; I had a son that was spoiled among 'em; a good hopeful lad, till he learned to be a wit—and might have risen in the state.—But a pox on't! his wit run him out of his money, and now his poverty has run him out of his wits.

Ang. Sir Sampson, as your friend, I must tell you, you are very much abused in that matter: he's no more mad than you are.

Sir Samp. How, madam! would I could prove it!

Ang. I can tell you how that may be done.—But it is a thing that would make me appear to be too much concerned in your affairs.

Sir Samp. [*Aside.*] Odsbud, I believe she likes me!—[*Aloud.*] Ah, madam, all my affairs are scarce worthy to be laid at your feet; and I wish, madam, they were in a better posture, that I might make a more becoming offer to a lady of your incomparable beauty and merit.—If I had Peru in one hand, and Mexico in t'other, and the eastern empire under my feet, it would make me only a more glorious victim to be offered at the shrine of your beauty.

Ang. Bless me, sir Sampson, what's the matter?

Sir Samp. Odd, madam, I love you!—and if you would take my advice in a husband—

Ang. Hold, hold, sir Sampson. I asked your advice for a husband, and you are giving me your consent.—I was indeed thinking to propose something like it in jest, to satisfy you about Valentine: for if a match were seemingly carried on between you and me, it would oblige him to throw off his disguise of madness, in apprehension of losing me: for you know he has long pretended a passion for me.

Sir Samp. Gadzooks, a most ingenious contrivance!—if we were to go through with it. But why must the match only be seemingly carried on?—Odd, let it be a real contract.

Ang. O fy, sir Sampson! what would the world say?

Sir Samp. Say! they would say you were a wise woman and I a happy man. Odd, madam, I'll love you as long as I live, and leave you a good jointure when I die.

Ang. Ay; but that is not in your power, sir Sampson; for when Valentine confesses himself in his senses, he must make over his inheritance to his younger brother.

Sir Samp. Odd, you're cunning, a wary baggage! faith and troth, I like you the better.—But, I warrant you, I have a proviso in the obligation in favour of myself.—Body o'me, I have a trick to turn the settlement upon the issue male of our two bodies begotten. Odsbud, let us find children, and I'll find an estate.

Ang. Will you? well do you find the estate, and leave the other to me.

Sir Samp. O rogue! but I'll trust you. And will you consent! is it a match then?

Ang. Let me consult my lawyer concerning this obligation; and if I find what you propose practicable, I'll give you my answer.

Sir Samp. With all my heart; come in with me, and I'll lend you the bond.—You shall consult your lawyer, and I'll consult a parson. Odzooks I'm a young man: odzooks, I'm a young man, and I'll make it appear. Odd, you're devilish handsome: faith and troth, you're very handsome; and I'm very young, and very lusty. Odsbud, hussy, you know how to choose, and so do I;—odd, I think we are very well met. Give me your hand, odd, let me kiss it; 'tis as warm and as soft—as what?—Odd, as t'other hand; give me t'other hand, and I'll mumble 'em and kiss 'em till they melt in my mouth.

Ang. Hold, sir Sampson: you're profuse of your vigour before your time: you'll spend your estate before you come to it.

Sir Samp. No, no, only give you a rent-roll of my possessions,—ha! baggage!—I warrant you for little Sampson: odd, Sampson's a very good name for an able fellow: your Sampsons were strong dogs from the beginning.

Ang. Have a care, and don't overact your part. If you remember, Sampson, the strongest of the name, pulled an old house over his head at last.

Sir Samp. Say you so, hussy? Come, let's go then; odd, I long to be pulling too, come away.—Odso, here's somebody coming.

SCENE III.

TATTLE *and* JEREMY.

Tat. Is not that she, gone out just now?

Jer. Ay, sir, she's just going to the place of appointment. Ah, sir, if you are not very faithful and close in this business, you'll certainly be the death of a person that has a most extraordinary passion for your honour's service.

Tat. Ay, who's that?

Jer. Even my unworthy self, sir. Sir, I have had an appetite to be fed with your commands a great while; and now, sir, my former master having much troubled the fountain of his understanding, it is a very plausible occasion for me to quench my thirst at the spring of your bounty. I thought I could not recommend myself better to you, sir, than by the delivery of a great beauty and fortune into your arms, whom I have heard you sigh for.

Tat. I'll make thy fortune; say no more. Thou art a pretty fellow, and canst carry a message to a lady, in a pretty soft kind of phrase, and with a good persuading accent.

Jer. Sir, I have the seeds of rhetoric and oratory in my head; I have been at Cambridge.

Tat. Ay! 'tis well enough for a servant to be bred at a university: but the education is a little too pedantic for a gentleman. I hope you are secret in your nature, private, close, ha?

Jer. O sir, for that, sir, 'tis my chief talent: I'm as secret as the head of Nilus.

Tat. Ay! who is he, though? a privy counsellor?

Jer. [*Aside.*] O ignorance!—[*Aloud.*] A cunning Egyptian, sir, that with his arms would overrun the country; yet nobody could ever find out his head-quarters.

Tat. Close dog! a good whoremaster, I warrant him. The time draws nigh, Jeremy. Angelica will be veiled like a nun; and I must be hooded like a friar; ha, Jeremy?

Jer. Ay, sir, hooded like a hawk, to seize at first sight upon the quarry. It is the whim of my master's madness to be so dressed; and she is so in love with him, she'll comply with anything to please him. Poor lady, I'm sure she'll have reason to pray for me, when she finds what a happy exchange she has made, between a madman and so accomplished a gentleman.

Tat. Ay, faith, so she will, Jeremy; you're a good friend to her, poor creature. I swear I do it hardly so much in consideration of myself as compassion to her.

Jer. 'Tis an act of charity, sir, to save a fine woman with thirty thousand pounds, from throwing herself away.

Tat. So 'tis, faith. I might have saved several others in my time; but egad I could never find in my heart to marry anybody before.

Jer. Well, sir, I'll go and tell her my master's coming; and meet you in half a quarter of an hour, with your disguise, at your own lodgings. You must talk a little madly, she won't distinguish the tone of your voice.

Tat. No, no, let me alone for a counterfeit; I'll be ready for you.

SCENE IV.

TATTLE *and* MISS PRUE.

Prue. O Mr. Tattle, are you here! I'm glad I have found you; I have been looking up and down for you like anything, 'till I am as tired as anything in the world.

Tat. O pox, how shall I get rid of this foolish girl! [*Aside.*

Prue. O I have pure news, I can tell you pure news. I must not marry the seaman now—my father says so. Why won't you be my husband? you say you love me, and you won't be my husband. And I know you may be my husband now if you please.

Tat. O fy, miss! who told you so, child?

Prue. Why, my father. I told him that you loved me.

Tat. O fy, miss! why did you do so? and who told you so, child?

Prue. Who! why you did; did not you?

Tat. O pox! that was yesterday, miss, that was a great while ago, child. I have been asleep since; slept a whole night, and did not so much as dream of the matter.

Prue. Pshaw! O but I dreamt that it was so though.

Tat. Ay, but your father will tell you that dreams come by contraries, child. O fy! what, we must not love one another now—pshaw, that would be a foolish thing indeed! Fy! fy! you're a woman now, and must think of a new man every morning, and forget him every night.—No, no, to marry is to be a child again, and play with the same rattle always; O fy! marrying is a paw thing.

Prue. Well, but don't you love me as well as you did last night then?

Tat. No, no, child, you would not have me.

Prue. No! yes, but I would though.

Tat. Pshaw! but I tell you, you would not—You forget you're a woman, and don't know your own mind.

Prue. But here's my father, and he knows my mind.

SCENE V.

TATTLE, MISS PRUE, *and* FORESIGHT.

Fore. O, Mr. Tattle, your servant, you are a close man; but methinks your love to my daughter was a secret I might have been trusted with; or had you a mind to try if I could discover it by my art? Hum, ha! I think there is something in

your physiognomy that has a resemblance of her; and the girl is like me.

Tat. And so you would infer, that you and I are alike?—[*Aside*] What does the old prig mean? I'll banter him, and laugh at him, and leave him.—[*Aloud.*] I fancy you have a wrong notion of faces.

Fore. How? what? a wrong notion! how so?

Tat. In the way of art: I have some taking features, not obvious to vulgar eyes; that are indications of a sudden turn of good fortune in the lottery of wives; and promise a great beauty and great fortune reserved alone for me, by a private intrigue of destiny, kept secret from the piercing eye of perspicuity; from all astrologers and the stars themselves.

Fore. How? I will make it appear that what you say is impossible.

Tat. Sir, I beg your pardon, I'm in haste—

Fore. For what?

Tat. To be married, sir, married.

Fore. Ay, but pray take me along with you, sir—

Tat. No, sir; 'tis to be done privately. I never make confidants.

Fore. Well, but my consent I mean.—You won't marry my daughter without my consent?

Tat. Who, I, sir? I'm an absolute stranger to you and your daughter, sir.

Fore. Heyday! what time of the moon is this?

Tat. Very true, sir, and desire to continue so. I have no more love for your daughter than I have likeness of you; and I have a secret in my heart, which you would be glad to know, and shan't know; and yet you shall know it too, and be sorry for it afterwards. I'd have you to know, sir, that I am as knowing as the stars, and as secret as the night. And I'm going to be married just now, yet did not know of it half an hour ago; and the lady stays for me, and does not know of it yet. There's a mystery for you!—I know you love to untie difficulties—or if you can't solve this, stay here a quarter of an hour, and I'll come and explain it to you.

SCENE VI.

FORESIGHT *and* MISS PRUE.

Prue. O father, why will you let him go? won't you make him to be my husband?

Fore. Mercy on us! what do these lunacies portend?—Alas! he's mad, child, stark wild.

Prue. What, and must not I have e'er a husband then? What, must I go to bed to nurse again, and be a child as long as she's an old woman? Indeed but I won't; for now my mind is set upon a man, I will have a man some way or other. Oh! methinks I'm sick when I think of a man; and if I can't have one, I would go to sleep all my life: for when I'm awake it makes me wish and long, and I don't know for what:—and I'd rather be always asleep, than sick with thinking.

Fore. O fearful! I think the girl's influenced too.—Hussy, you shall have a rod.

Prue. A fiddle of a rod! I'll have a husband: and if you won't get me one, I'll get one for myself. I'll marry our Robin the butler; he says he loves me, and he's a handsome man, and shall be my husband: I warrant he'll be my husband, and thank me too, for he told me so.

SCENE VII.

FORESIGHT, MISS PRUE, SCANDAL, MRS. FORESIGHT, *and* NURSE.

Fore. Did he so? I'll despatch him for it presently; rogue!—Oh, nurse, come hither.

Nurse. What is your worship's pleasure?

Fore. Here take your young mistress, and lock her up presently, till farther orders from me.—Not a word, hussy. Do what I bid you; no reply; away! And bid Robin make ready to give an account of his plate and linen, d'ye hear: begone when I bid you.

Mrs. Fore. What is the matter, husband?

Fore. 'Tis not convenient to tell you now.—Mr. Scandal, heaven keep us all in our senses!—I fear there is a contagious frenzy abroad. How does Valentine?

Scan. O, I hope he will do well again:—I have a message from him to your niece Angelica.

Fore. I think she has not returned since she went abroad with Sir Sampson.—Nurse, why are you not gone?

SCENE VIII.

FORESIGHT, SCANDAL, MRS. FORESIGHT, *and* BEN.

Mrs. Fore. Here's Mr. Benjamin; he can tell us if his father be come home.

Ben. Who, father? ay, he's come home with a vengeance.

Mrs. Fore. Why, what's the matter?

Ben. Matter! why, he's mad.

Fore. Mercy on us! I was afraid of this.

Ben. And there's the handsome young woman, she, as they say, brother Val went mad for, she's mad too, I think.

Fore. O my poor niece, my poor niece, is she gone too? Well, I shall run mad next.

Mrs. Fore. Well, but how mad? how d'ye mean?

Ben. Nay, I'll give you leave to guess:—I'll undertake to make a voyage to Antegoa—no, hold, I mayn't say so neither—but I'll sail as far as Leghorn, and back again, before you shall guess at the matter, and do nothing else; mess, you may take in all the points of the compass, and not hit right.

Mrs. Fore. Your experiment will take up a little too much time.

Ben. Why then I'll tell you; there's a new wedding upon the stocks, and they two are a-going to be married to night.

Scan. Who?

Ben. Why, father, and—the young woman. I can't hit of her name.

Scan. Angelica?

Ben. Ay, the same.

Mrs. Fore. Sir Sampson and Angelica? impossible!

Ben. That may be—but I'm sure it is as I tell you.

Scan. 'Sdeath, it's a jest! I can't believe it.

Ben. Look you, friend, it's nothing to me whether you believe it or no. What I say is true, d'ye see; they are married, or just going to be married, I know not which.

Fore. Well, but they are not mad, that is, not lunatic?

Ben. I don't know what you may call madness; but she's mad for a husband, and he's horn mad, I think, or they'd ne'er make a match together.—Here they come.

SCENE IX.

FORESIGHT, SCANDAL, MRS. FORESIGHT, BEN, SIR SAMPSON, ANGELICA, *and* BUCKRAM.

Sir Samp. Where is this old soothsayer? this uncle of mine elect?—Aha! old Foresight, uncle Foresight, wish me joy, uncle Foresight, double joy, both as uncle and astrologer; here's a conjunction that was not foretold in all your Ephemeris. The brightest star in the blue firmament—is *shot from above in a jelly of love*, and so forth; and I'm lord of the ascendant. Odd, you're an old fellow, Foresight, uncle I mean; a very old fellow, uncle Foresight; and yet you shall live to dance at my wedding, faith and troth you shall. Odd, we'll have the music of the spheres for thee, old Lilly, that we will, and thou shalt lead up a dance *in via lactea!*

Fore. I'm thunderstruck!—You are not married to my niece?

Sir Samp. Not absolutely married, uncle; but very near it, within a kiss of the matter, as you see. [*Kisses* ANGELICA.

Ang. 'Tis very true, indeed, uncle; I hope you'll be my father, and give me.

Sir Samp. That he shall, or I'll burn his globes. Body o'me, he shall be thy father, I'll make him thy father, and thou shalt make me a father, and I'll make thee a mother, and we'll beget sons and daughters enough to put the weekly bills out of countenance.

Scan. Death and hell! where's Valentine?

SCENE X.

SIR SAMPSON, ANGELICA, FORESIGHT, MRS. FORESIGHT, BEN, *and* BUCKRAM.

Mrs. Fore. This is so surprising—

Sir Samp. How! what does my aunt say? Surprising, aunt! not at all, for a young couple to make a match in winter: not at all.—It's a plot to undermine cold-weather, and destroy that usurper of a bed called a warming-pan.

Mrs. Fore. I'm glad to hear you have so much fire in you, sir Sampson.

Ben. Mess, I fear his fire's little better than tinder: mayhap it will only serve to light up a match for somebody else. The young woman's a handsome young woman, I can't deny it; but father, if I might be your pilot in this case, you should not marry her. It's just the same thing, as if so be you should sail so far as the Straits without provision.

Sir Samp. Who gave you authority to speak, sirrah? To your element, fish! be mute, fish, and to sea! rule your helm, sirrah, don't direct me.

Ben. Well, well, take you care of your own helm, or you mayn't keep your new vessel steady.

Sir Samp. Why, you impudent tarpaulin! sirrah, do you bring your forecastle jests upon your father? but I shall be even with you, I won't give you a groat.—Mr. Buckram, is the conveyance so worded that nothing can possibly descend to this scoundrel? I would not so much as have him have the prospect of an estate; though there were no way to come to it but by the north-east passage.

Buck. Sir, it is drawn according to your directions, there is not the least cranny of the law unstopped.

Ben. Lawyer, I believe there's many a cranny and leak unstopped in your conscience.—If so be that one had a pump to your bosom, I believe we should discover a foul hold. They say a witch will sail in a sieve,—but I believe the devil would not venture aboard o'your conscience. And that's for you.

Sir Samp. Hold your tongue, sirrah!—How now? who's here?

SCENE XI.

SIR SAMPSON, ANGELICA, FORESIGHT, MRS. FORESIGHT, BEN, BUCKRAM, TATTLE, *and* MRS. FRAIL.

Frail. O sister, the most unlucky accident!

Mrs. Fore. What's the matter?

Tat. Oh, the two most unfortunate poor creatures in the world we are!

Fore. Bless us! how so?

Frail. Ah, Mr. Tattle and I, poor Mr. Tattle and I are—I can't speak it out.

Tat. Nor I—but poor Mrs. Frail and I are—

Frail. Married.

Mrs. Fore. Married! How?

Tat. Suddenly—before we knew where we were—that villain Jeremy, by the help of disguises, tricked us into one another.

Fore. Why, you told me just now, you went hence in haste to be married.

Ang. But I believe Mr. Tattle meant the favour to me: I thank him.

Tat. I did, as I hope to be saved, madam; my intentions were good.—But this is the most cruel thing, to marry one does not know how, nor why, nor wherefore.—The devil take me if ever I was so much concerned at anything in my life!

Ang. 'Tis very unhappy, if you don't care for one another.

Tat. The least in the world;—that is, for my part; I speak for myself. Gad, I never had the least thought of serious kindness:—I never liked anybody less in my life. Poor woman! gad, I'm sorry for her, too; for I have no reason to hate her neither; but I believe I shall lead her a damned sort of a life.

Mrs. Fore. [*Aside to* MRS. FRAIL.] He's better than no husband at all—though he's a coxcomb.

Frail. [*Aside to* MRS. FORESIGHT.] Ay, ay, it's well it's no worse.—[*Aloud.*] Nay, for my part I always despised Mr. Tattle of all things; nothing but his being my husband could have made me like him less.

Tat. Look you there, I thought as much!—Pox on't, I wish we could keep it secret! why I don't believe any of this company would speak of it.

Frail. But, my dear, that's impossible; the parson and that rogue Jeremy will publish it.

Tat. Ay, my dear, so they will, as you say.

Ang. O you'll agree very well in a little time; custom will make it easy to you.

Tat. Easy! pox on't! I don't believe I shall sleep to-night.

Sir Samp. Sleep, quotha! no; why you would not sleep o' your wedding night! I'm an older fellow than you, and don't mean to sleep.

Ben. Why, there's another match now, as tho'f a couple of privateers were looking for a prize, and should fall foul of one another. I'm sorry for the young man with all my heart. Look you, friend, if I may advise you, when she's going, for that you must expect, I have experience of her, when she's going, let her go. For no matrimony is tough enough to hold her, and if she can't drag her anchor along with her, she'll break her cable, I can tell you that.—Who's here? the madman?

SCENE XII.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, Sir SAMPSON, ANGELICA, FORESIGHT, Mrs. FORESIGHT, TATTLE, Mrs. FRAIL, BEN, JEREMY, *and* BUCKRAM.

Val. No; here's the fool; and, if occasion be, I'll give it under my hand.

Sir Samp. How now!

Val. Sir, I'm come to acknowledge my errors, and ask your pardon.

Sir Samp. What, have you found your senses at last then? in good time, sir.

Val. You were abused, sir, I never was distracted.

Fore. How, not mad! Mr. Scandal?

Scan. No, really, sir; I'm his witness, it was all counterfeit.

Val. I thought I had reasons.—But it was a poor contrivance; the effect has shown it such.

Sir Samp. Contrivance! what, to cheat me? to cheat your father? sirrah, could you hope to prosper?

Val. Indeed, I thought, sir, when the father endeavoured to undo the son, it was a reasonable return of nature.

Sir Samp. Very good, sir!—Mr. Buckram, are you ready?—[*To* VALENTINE.] Come, sir, will you sign and seal?

Val. If you please, sir; but first I would ask this lady one question.

Sir Samp. Sir, you must ask me leave first.—That lady! no, sir; you shall ask that lady no questions, till you have asked her blessing, sir; that lady is to be my wife.

Val. I have heard as much, sir; but I would have it from her own mouth.

Sir Samp. That's as much as to say, I lie, sir, and you don't believe what I say.

Val. Pardon me, sir. But I reflect that I very lately counterfeited madness; I don't know but the frolic may go round.

Sir Samp. Come, chuck, satisfy him, answer him.—Come, come, Mr. Buckram, the pen and ink.

Buck. Here it is, sir, with the deed; all is ready.
[VALENTINE *goes to* ANGELICA.

Ang. 'Tis true, you have a great while pretended love to me; nay, what if you were sincere; still you must pardon me, if I think my own inclinations have a better right to dispose of my person, than yours.

Sir Samp. Are you answered now, sir?

Val. Yes, sir.

Sir Samp. Where's your plot, sir? and your contrivance now, sir? Will you sign, sir? come, will you sign and seal?

Val. With all my heart, sir.

Scan. 'Sdeath, you are not mad indeed, to ruin yourself?

Val. I have been disappointed of my only hope; and he that loses hope may part with anything. I never valued fortune, but as it was subservient to my pleasure; and my only pleasure was to please this lady; I have made many vain attempts, and find at last that nothing but my ruin can effect it; which, for that reason, I will sign to.—Give me the paper.

Ang. Generous Valentine! [*Aside.*

Buck. Here is the deed, sir.

Val. But where is the bond, by which I am obliged to sign this?

Buck. Sir Sampson, you have it.

Ang. No, I have it; and I'll use it, as I would everything that is an enemy to Valentine.
[*Tears the paper.*

Sir Samp. How now!

Val. Ha!

Ang. [*To* VALENTINE.] Had I the world to give you, it could not make me worthy of so generous and faithful a passion; here's my hand, my heart was always yours, and struggled very hard to make this utmost trial of your virtue.

Val. Between pleasure and amazement, I am lost.—But on my knees I take the blessing.

Sir Samp. Oons, what is the meaning of this?

Ben. Mess, here's the wind changed again! Father, you and I may make a voyage together now.

Ang. Well, sir Sampson, since I have played you a trick, I'll advise you how you may avoid such another. Learn to be a good father, or you'll never get a second wife. I always loved your son, and hated your unforgiving nature. I was resolved to try him to the utmost; I have tried you too, and know you both. You have not more faults than he has virtues; and 'tis hardly more pleasure to me, that I can make him and myself happy, than that I can punish you.

Val. If my happiness could receive addition, this kind surprise would make it double.

Sir Samp. Oons, you're a crocodile!

Fore. Really, sir Sampson, this is a sudden eclipse.

Sir Samp. You're an illiterate old fool, and I'm another! [*Exit.*

Tat. If the gentleman is in disorder for want of a wife, I can spare him mine.—[*To* JEREMY.] Oh, are you there, sir? I'm indebted to you for my happiness.

Jer. Sir, I ask you ten thousand pardons; 'twas an arrant mistake.—You see, sir, my master was never mad, or anything like it:—then how could it be otherwise?

Val. Tattle, I thank you, you would have interposed between me and heaven; but Providence laid purgatory in your way:—you have but justice.

Scan. I hear the fiddles that sir Sampson provided for his own wedding; methinks 'tis pity they

should not be employed when the match is so much mended.—Valentine, though it be morning, we may have a dance.

Val. Anything, my friend, everything that looks like joy and transport.

Scan. Call 'em, Jeremy.

Ang. I have done dissembling now, Valentine; and if that coldness which I have always worn before you, should turn to an extreme fondness, you must not suspect it.

Val. I'll prevent that suspicion:—for I intend to dote to that immoderate degree, that your fondness shall never distinguish itself enough to be taken notice of. If ever you seem to love too much, it must be only when I can't love enough.

Ang. Have a care of promises; you know you are apt to run more in debt than you are able to pay.

Val. Therefore I yield my body as your prisoner, and make your best on't.

Jer. The music stays for you.

A Dance.

Scan. Well, madam, you have done exemplary justice, in punishing an inhuman father, and rewarding a faithful lover: but there is a third good work, which I, in particular, must thank you for; I was an infidel to your sex, and you have converted me.—For now I am convinced that all women are not like Fortune, blind in bestowing favours, either on those who do not merit, or who do not want 'em.

Ang. 'Tis an unreasonable accusation, that you lay upon our sex: you tax us with injustice, only to cover your own want of merit. You would all have the reward of love; but few have the constancy to stay till it becomes your due. Men are generally hypocrites and infidels, they pretend to worship, but have neither zeal nor faith: how few, like Valentine, would persevere even to martyrdom, and sacrifice their interest to their constancy! In admiring me you misplace the novelty:—

The miracle to-day is, that we find
A lover true: not that a woman's kind.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW HOUSE BY MRS. BRACEGIRDLE.

Sure Providence at first design'd this place
To be the player's refuge in distress;
For still in every storm they all run hither,
As to a shed that shields 'em from the weather.
But thinking of this change which last befel us,
It's like what I have heard our poets tell us:
For when behind our scenes their suits are pleading,
To help their love sometimes they show their reading;
And wanting ready cash to pay for hearts,
They top their learning on us and their parts.
Once of philosophers they told us stories,
Whom, as I think, they call'd—Py—Pythagories;—
I'm sure 'tis some such *Latin* name they give 'em,
And we, who know no better, must believe 'em.
Now to these men (say they) such souls were given,
That after death ne'er went to hell nor heaven,
But lived, I know not how, in beasts; and then,
When many years were pass'd, in men again.
Methinks, we players resemble such a soul;
That, does from bodies, we from houses stroll.
Thus Aristotle's soul, of old that was,
May now be damn'd to animate an ass;
Or in this very house, for aught we know,
Is doing painful penance in some beau:
And thus, our audience, which did once resort
To shining theatres to see our sport,
Now find us toss'd into a tennis-court.
These walls but t'other day were fill'd with noise
Of roaring gamesters, and your *damme* boys;
Then bounding balls and rackets they encompast,
And now they're fill'd with jests, and flights, and bombast!
I vow, I don't much like this transmigration,
Strolling from place to place by circulation;
Grant, Heaven, we don't return to our first station!
I know not what these think, but, for my part,
I can't reflect without an aching heart,
How we should end in our original, a cart.
But we can't fear, since you're so good to save us,
That you have only set us up,—to leave us.
Thus from the past, we hope for future grace,
I beg it——————
And some here know I have a begging face.
Then pray continue this your kind behaviour,
For a clear stage won't do, without your favour.

THE MOURNING BRIDE.

A Tragedy.

———Neque enim lex æquior ulla,
Quam necis artifices arte perire suâ.—Ovid. de Arte Amandi.

TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS,

THE PRINCESS.

Madam,—That high station which by your birth you hold above the people, exacts from every one, as a duty, whatever honours they are capable of paying to your Royal Highness: but that more exalted place to which your virtues have raised you above the rest of princes, makes the tribute of our admiration and praise rather a choice more immediately preventing that duty.

The public gratitude is ever founded on a public benefit; and what is universally blessed, is always a universal blessing. Thus from yourself we derive the offerings which we bring; and that incense which arises to your name, only returns to its original, and but naturally requites the parent of its being.

From hence it is that this poem, constituted on a moral whose end is to recommend and to encourage virtue, of consequence has recourse to your Royal Highness's patronage; aspiring to cast itself beneath your feet, and declining approbation, till you shall condescend to own it, and vouchsafe to shine upon it as on a creature of your influence.

It is from the example of princes that virtue becomes a fashion in the people; for even they who are averse to instruction will yet be fond of imitation.

But there are multitudes who never can have means nor opportunities of so near an access, as to partake of the benefit of such examples. And to these Tragedy, which distinguishes itself from the vulgar poetry by the dignity of its characters, may be of use and information. For they who are at that distance from original greatness as to be deprived of the happiness of contemplating the perfections and real excellences of your Royal Highness's person in your court, may yet behold some small sketches and imagings of the virtues of your mind, abstracted and represented on the theatre.

Thus poets are instructed, and instruct; not alone by precepts which persuade, but also by examples which illustrate. Thus is delight interwoven with instruction; when not only virtue is prescribed, but also represented.

But if we are delighted with the liveliness of a feigned representation of great and good persons and their actions, how must we be charmed with beholding the persons themselves! If one or two excelling qualities, barely touched in the single action and small compass of a play, can warm an audience, with a concern and regard even for the seeming success and prosperity of the actor: with what zeal must the hearts of all be filled for the continued and increasing happiness of those who are the true and living instances of elevated and persisting virtue! Even the vicious themselves must have a secret veneration for those peculiar graces and endowments which are daily so eminently conspicuous in your Royal Highness; and, though repining, feel a pleasure which, in spite of envy, they perforce approve.

If in this piece, humbly offered to your Royal Highness, there shall appear the resemblance of any of those many excellences which you so promiscuously possess, to be drawn so as to merit your least approbation, it has the end and accomplishment of its design. And however imperfect it may be in the whole, through the inexperience or incapacity of the author, yet, if there is so much as to convince your Royal Highness, that a play may be with industry so disposed (in spite of the licentious practice of the modern theatre) as to become sometimes an innocent, and not unprofitable entertainment; it will abundantly gratify the ambition, and recompense the endeavours of your Royal Highness's most obedient, and most humbly devoted servant, WILLIAM CONGREVE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Manuel, *the King of Granada.*
Gonsalez, *his Favourite.*
Garcia, *Son to* Gonsalez.
Perez, *Captain of the Guards.*
Alonzo, *an Officer, creature to* Gonsalez.
Osmyn, *a noble Prisoner.*
Heli, *a Prisoner, his Friend.*
Selim, *a Eunuch.*

Almeria, *the Princess of Granada.*
Zara, *a captive Queen.*
Leonora, *chief Attendant on the Princess.*

Almeria's Women, Eunuchs *and* Mutes *attending* Zara, Guards, Prisoners, *and* Attendants.

SCENE,—Granada.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. BETTERTON.

The time has been when plays were not so plenty,
And a less number new would well content ye.
New plays did then like almanacs appear;
And one was thought sufficient for a year:
Though they are more like almanacs of late;
For in one year, I think, they're out of date.
Nor were they without reason join'd together;
For just as one prognosticates the weather,
How plentiful the crop, or scarce the grain,
What peals of thunder, and what showers of rain;
So t'other can foretell, by certain rules,
What crops of coxcombs, or what floods of fools.
In such like prophecies were poets skill'd,
Which now they find in their own tribe fulfill'd:
The dearth of wit they did so long presage,
Is fallen on us, and almost starves the stage.
Were you not grieved as often as you saw
Poor actors thrash such empty sheafs of straw?
Toiling and labouring at their lungs' expense,
To start a jest, or force a little sense.
Hard fate for us! still harder in the event;
Our authors sin, but we alone repent.
Still they proceed, and, at our charge, write worse;
'Twere some amends if they could reimburse:
But there's the devil, though their cause is lost,
There's no recovering damages or cost.
  Good wits, forgive this liberty we take,
Since custom gives the losers leave to speak.
But if provoked, your dreadful wrath remains,
Take your revenge upon the coming scenes:
For that damn'd poet's spared who damns a brother,
As one thief 'scapes that executes another.
Thus far alone does to the wits relate;
But from the rest we hope a better fate.
To please and move has been our poet's theme,
Art may direct, but nature is his aim;
And nature miss'd, in vain he boasts his art,
For only nature can affect the heart.
Then freely judge the scenes that shall ensue;
But as with freedom, judge with candour too.
He would not lose through prejudice his cause,
Nor would obtain precariously applause;
Impartial censure he requests from all,
Prepared by just decrees to stand or fall.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room of State in the Palace.*

The curtain rising slowly to soft music, discovers ALMERIA *in mourning,* LEONORA *waiting in mourning. After the music,* ALMERIA *rises from her chair and comes forward.*

Alm. Music has charms to soothe a savage breast,
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.
I've read that things inanimate have moved,
And, as with living souls, have been inform'd,
By magic numbers and persuasive sound.
What then am I? Am I more senseless grown
Than trees or flint? O force of constant woe!
'Tis not in harmony to calm my griefs.
Anselmo sleeps, and is at peace; last night
The silent tomb received the good old king;
He and his sorrows now are safely lodged
Within its cold but hospitable bosom.
Why am not I at peace?
  Leon. Dear madam, cease,
Or moderate your griefs; there is no cause—
  Alm. No cause! peace, peace; there is eternal cause,
And misery eternal will succeed.
Thou canst not tell—thou hast indeed no cause.
  Leon. Believe me, madam, I lament Anselmo,
And always did compassionate his fortune:
Have often wept to see how cruelly
Your father kept in chains his fellow-king:
And oft at night when all have been retired,
Have stolen from bed, and to his prison crept;
Where, while his jailor slept, I through the grate
Have softly whisper'd, and inquired his health;
Sent in my sighs and prayers for his deliverance;
For sighs and prayers were all that I could offer.
  Alm. Indeed thou hast a soft and gentle nature,
That thus couldst melt to see a stranger's wrongs.
O Leonora, hadst thou known Anselmo,
How would thy heart have bled to see his sufferings!
Thou hadst no cause, but general compassion.
  Leon. Love of my royal mistress gave me cause,
My love of you begot my grief for him;
For I had heard that when the chance of war
Had bless'd Anselmo's arms with victory,
And the rich spoil of all the field, and you,
The glory of the whole, were made the prey
Of his success; that then, in spite of hate,
Revenge, and that hereditary feud
Between Valentia's and Granada's kings,
He did endear himself to your affection,
By all the worthy and indulgent ways
His most industrious goodness could invent;
Proposing by a match between Alphonso
His son, the brave Valentia prince, and you,
To end the long dissension, and unite
The jarring crowns.
  Alm. Alphonso! O Alphonso!
Thou too art quiet—long hast been at peace—
Both, both—father and son are now no more.
Then why am I? O when shall I have rest?
Why do I live to say you are no more?
Why are all these things thus?—Is it of force?
Is there necessity I must be miserable?
Is it of moment to the peace of heaven
That I should be afflicted thus?—If not,
Why is it thus contrived? Why are things laid

By some unseen hand so, as of sure consequence,
They must to me bring curses, grief of heart,
The last distress of life, and sure despair?
Leon. Alas, you search too far, and think too deeply!
Alm. Why was I carried to Anselmo's court?
Or there, why was I used so tenderly?
Why not ill treated like an enemy?
For so my father would have used his child.
O Alphonso! Alphonso!
Devouring seas have washed thee from my sight,
No time shall rase thee from my memory;
No, I will live to be thy monument;
The cruel ocean is no more thy tomb:
But in my heart thou art interr'd; there, there,
Thy dear resemblance is for ever fix'd;
My love, my lord, my husband still, though lost.
Leon. Husband! O heavens!
Alm. Alas! what have I said?
My grief has hurried me beyond all thought:
I would have kept that secret; though I know
Thy love and faith to me deserve all confidence.
But 'tis the wretch's comfort still to have
Some small reserve of near and inward woe,
Some unsuspected hoard of darling grief,
Which they unseen may wail, and weep and mourn,
And, glutton-like, alone devour.
Leon. Indeed
I knew not this.
Alm. O no, thou know'st not half,
Know'st nothing of my sorrows.—If thou didst—
If I should tell thee, wouldst thou pity me?
Tell me; I know thou wouldst, thou art compassionate.
Leon. Witness these tears!
Alm. I thank thee, Leonora,
Indeed I do, for pitying thy sad mistress;
For 'tis, alas! the poor prerogative
Of greatness, to be wretched and unpitied.
But I did promise I would tell thee—what?
My miseries? thou dost already know 'em;
And when I told thee thou didst nothing know,
It was because thou didst not know Alphonso:
For to have known my loss, thou must have known
His worth, his truth, and tenderness of love.
Leon. The memory of that brave prince stands fair
In all report—
And I have heard imperfectly his loss!
But fearful to renew your troubles past,
I never did presume to ask the story.
Alm. If for my swelling heart I can, I'll tell thee.
I was a welcome captive in Valentia,
Even on the day when Manuel my father
Led on his conquering troops, high as the gates
Of king Anselmo's palace; which in rage,
And heat of war, and dire revenge, he fired.
The good king flying to avoid the flames,
Started amidst his foes, and made captivity
His fatal refuge.—Would that I had fallen
Amid those flames!—but 'twas not so decreed.
Alphonso, who foresaw my father's cruelty,
Had borne the queen and me on board a ship
Ready to sail; and when this news was brought,
We put to sea; but being betray'd by some
Who knew our flight, we closely were pursued,
And almost taken; when a sudden storm
Drove us, and those that follow'd, on the coast
Of Afric; there our vessel struck the shore,
And bulging 'gainst a rock was dash'd in pieces!
But Heaven spared me for yet much more affliction!
Conducting them who follow'd us to shun
The shoal, and save me floating on the waves,
While the good queen and my Alphonso perish'd.
Leon. Alas! were you then wedded to Alphonso?
Alm. That day, that fatal day, our hands were join'd.
For when my lord beheld the ship pursuing,
And saw her rate so far exceeding ours;
He came to me, and begged me by my love,
I would consent the priest should make us one;
That whether death or victory ensued,
I might be his beyond the power of fate:
The queen too did assist his suit—I granted;
And in one day, was wedded and a widow.
Leon. Indeed 'twas mournful.
Alm. 'Twas as I have told thee;
For which I mourn, and will for ever mourn;
Nor will I change these black and dismal robes,
Or ever dry these swollen and watery eyes;
Or ever taste content, or peace of heart,
While I have life, and thought of my Alphonso.
Leon. Look down, good Heaven, with pity on her sorrows,
And grant that time may bring her some relief.
Alm. O no, time gives increase to my afflictions.
The circling hours, that gather all the woes,
Which are diffused through the revolving year,
Come, heavy-laden with the oppressing weight,
To me: with me, successively, they leave
The sighs, the tears, the groans, the restless cares,
And all the damps of grief, that did retard their flight;
They shake their downy wings, and scatter all
The dire collected dews on my poor head;
Then fly with joy and swiftness from me.
Leon. Hark!
The distant shouts proclaim your father's triumph.
[*Shouts at a distance.*
O cease, for heaven's sake, assuage a little
This torrent of your grief; for much I fear
'Twill urge his wrath to see you drown'd in tears,
When joy appears in every other face.
Alm. And joy he brings to every other heart,
But double, double weight of woe to mine;
For with him Garcia comes—Garcia, to whom
I must be sacrificed, and all the vows
I gave my dear Alphonso basely broken.
No, it shall never be; for I will die;
First, die ten thousand deaths!—Look down, look down, [*Kneels.*
Alphonso, hear the sacred vow I make;
One moment cease to gaze on perfect bliss,
And bend thy glorious eyes to earth and me;
And thou, Anselmo, if yet thou art arrived,
Through all impediments of purging fire,
To that bright heaven, where my Alphonso reigns,
Behold thou also, and attend my vow.
If ever I do yield, or give consent,
By any action, word, or thought, to wed
Another lord, may then just Heaven shower down
Unheard-of curses on me, greater far
(If such there be in angry Heaven's vengeance)
Than any I have yet endured.—And now [*Rising.*
My heart has some relief; having so well
Discharged this debt, incumbent on my love.
Yet one thing more I would engage from thee.
Leon. My heart, my life, and will, are only yours.

Alm. I thank thee. 'Tis but this; anon, when all
Are wrapp'd and busied in the general joy,
Thou wilt withdraw, and privately with me
Steal forth, to visit good Anselmo's tomb.
Leon. Alas! I fear some fatal resolution.
Alm. No, on my life, my faith, I mean no ill,
Nor violence. I feel myself more light,
And more at large, since I have made this vow.
Perhaps I would repeat it there more solemnly.
'Tis that, or some such melancholy thought,
Upon my word, no more.
Leon. I will attend you.

SCENE II.

ALMERIA, LEONORA, *and* ALONZO.

Alon. The lord Gonsalez comes to tell your highness
The king is just arrived.
Alm. Conduct him in. [*Exit* ALONZO.
That's his pretence; his errand is, I know,
To fill my ears with Garcia's valiant deeds,
And gild and magnify his son's exploits.
But I am arm'd with ice around my heart,
Not to be warm'd with words, or idle eloquence.

SCENE III.

GONSALEZ, ALMERIA, *and* LEONORA.

Gon. Be every day of your long life like this!
The sun, bright conquest, and your brighter eyes,
Have all conspired to blaze promiscuous light,
And bless this day with most unequall'd lustre.
Your royal father, my victorious lord,
Loaden with spoils, and ever-living laurel,
Is entering now in martial pomp the palace.
Five hundred mules precede his solemn march,
Which groan beneath the weight of Moorish wealth.
Chariots of war, adorn'd with glittering gems,
Succeed; and next, a hundred neighing steeds,
White as the fleecy rain on Alpine hills,
That bound and foam, and champ the golden bit,
As they disdain'd the victory they grace.
Prisoners of war in shining fetters follow;
And captains, of the noblest blood of Afric,
Sweat by his chariot wheel, and lick and grind,
With gnashing teeth, the dust his triumphs raise.
The swarming populace spread every wall,
And cling, as if with claws they did enforce
Their hold through clifted stones, stretching and staring,
As if they were all eyes, and every limb
Would feed its faculty of admiration:
While you alone retire, and shun this sight;
This sight, which is indeed not seen (though twice
The multitude should gaze) in absence of your eyes.
Alm. My lord, my eyes ungratefully behold
The gilded trophies of exterior honours.
Nor will my ears be charm'd with sounding words,
Or pompous phrase; the pageantry of souls.
But that my father is return'd in safety,
I bend to Heaven with thanks.
Gon. Excellent princess!
But 'tis a task unfit for my weak age,
With dying words, to offer at your praise.
Garcia, my son, your beauty's lowest slave,
Has better done, in proving with his sword
The force and influence of your matchless charms.
Alm. I doubt not of the worth of Garcia's deeds,
Which had been brave, though I had ne'er been born.
Leon. Madam, the king. [*Flourish.*
Alm. My women. I would meet him.
[Attendants *to* ALMERIA *enter in mourning.*

SCENE IV.

Symphony of warlike music. Enter MANUEL, *attended by* GARCIA *and several Officers. Files of* Prisoners *in chains, and* Guards, *who are ranged in order round the stage.* ALMERIA *meets* MANUEL, *and kneels; afterwards* GONSALEZ *kneels, and kisses* MANUEL'S *hand, while* GARCIA *does the same to* ALMERIA.

Man. Almeria, rise!—My best Gonsalez, rise!
What, tears! my good old friend!
Gon. But tears of joy.
Believe me, sir, to see you thus has fill'd
My eyes with more delight than they can hold.
Man. By heaven, thou lovest me, and I'm pleased thou dost!
Take it for thanks, old man, that I rejoice
To see thee weep on this occasion.—Some
Here are, who seem to mourn at our success!
Why is't, Almeria, that you meet our eyes,
Upon this solemn day, in these sad weeds?
In opposition to my brightness, you
And yours are all like daughters of affliction.
Alm. Forgive me, sir, if I in this offend.
The year, which I have vow'd to pay to Heaven
In mourning and strict life for my deliverance
From wreck and death, wants yet to be expired.
Man. Your zeal to Heaven is great, so is your debt:
Yet something too is due to me, who gave
That life which Heaven preserved. A day bestow'd
In filial duty, had atoned and given
A dispensation to your vow—No more.
'Twas weak and wilful—and a woman's error.
Yet—upon thought, it doubly wounds my sight,
To see that sable worn upon the day
Succeeding that, in which our deadliest foe,
Hated Anselmo, was interr'd.—By heaven,
It looks as thou didst mourn for him! just so,
Thy senseless vow appear'd to bear its date,
Not from that hour wherein thou wert preserved,
But that wherein the cursed Alphonso perish'd.
Ha! what! thou dost not weep to think of that?
Gon. Have patience, royal sir; the princess weeps
To have offended you. If fate decreed
One pointed hour should be Alphonso's loss,
And her deliverance; is she to blame?
Man. I tell thee she's to blame not to have feasted
When my first foe was laid in earth, such enmity,
Such detestation, bears my blood to his;
My daughter should have revell'd at his death,
She should have made these palace-walls to shake,
And all this high and ample roof to ring
With her rejoicings. What, to mourn, and weep;
Then, then to weep, and pray, and grieve! By heaven,
There's not a slave, a shackled slave of mine,
But should have smiled that hour, through all his care,
And shook his chains in transport and rude harmony!
Gon. What she has done was in excess of goodness;

Betray'd by too much piety, to seem
As if she had offended.—Sure, no more.
Man. To seem is to commit, at this conjuncture.
I wo' not have a seeming sorrow seen
To-day.—Retire, divest yourself with speed
Of that offensive black; on me be all
The violation of your vow: for you,
It shall be your excuse, that I command it.
Gar. [*Kneeling.*] Your pardon, sir, if I presume so far,
As to remind you of your gracious promise.
Man. Rise, Garcia—I forgot. Yet stay, Almeria.
Alm. My boding heart!—What is your pleasure, sir?
Man. Draw near, and give your hand; and, Garcia, yours:
Receive this lord, as one whom I have found
Worthy to be your husband, and my son.
Gar. Thus let me kneel to take—O not to take—
But to devote, and yield myself for ever
The slave and creature of my royal mistress!
Gon. O let me prostrate pay my worthless thanks—
Man. No more; my promise long since pass'd, thy services,
And Garcia's well-tried valour, all oblige me.
This day we triumph; but to-morrow's sun,
Garcia, shall shine to grace thy nuptials.
Alm. Oh! [*Faints.*
Gar. She faints! help to support her.
Gon. She recovers.
Man. A fit of bridal fear; how is't, Almeria?
Alm. A sudden chillness seizes on my spirits.
Your leave, sir, to retire.
Man. Garcia, conduct her.
[GARCIA *leads* ALMERIA *to the door and returns.*
This idle vow hangs on her woman's fears.
I'll have a priest shall preach her from her faith,
And make it sin not to renounce that vow
Which I'd have broken.—Now, what would Alonzo?

SCENE V.

MANUEL, GONSALEZ, GARCIA, ALONZO, *and* Attendants.

Alon. Your beauteous captive, Zara, is arrived,
And with a train as if she still were wife
To Abucacim, and the Moor had conquer'd.
Man. It is our will she should be so attended.
Bear hence these prisoners. Garcia, which is he,
Of whose mute valour you relate such wonders?
[Prisoners *led off.*
Gar. Osmyn, who led the Moorish horse; but he,
Great sir, at her request, attends on Zara.
Man. He is your prisoner; as you please dispose him.
Gar. I would oblige him, but he shuns my kindness;
And with a haughty mien, and stern civility,
Dumbly declines all offers: if he speak,
Tis scarce above a word; as he were born
Alone to do, and did disdain to talk;
At least, to talk where he must not command.
Man. Such sullenness, and in a man so brave,
Must have some other cause than his captivity.
Did Zara, then, request he might attend her?
Gar. My lord, she did.
Man. That, join'd with his behaviour,
Begets a doubt. I'd have 'em watched; perhaps
Her chains hang heavier on him than his own.

SCENE VI.

MANUEL, GONSALEZ, GARCIA, ALONZO, ZARA *and* OSMYN *bound, conducted by* PEREZ *and a* Guard, *and attended by* SELIM *and several* Mutes *and* Eunuchs *in a train.*

Man. What welcome and what honours, beauteous Zara,
A king and conqueror can give, are yours.
A conqueror indeed, where you are won;
Who with such lustre strike admiring eyes,
That had our pomp been with your presence graced,
The expecting crowd had been deceived; and seen
Their monarch enter not triumphant, but
In pleasing triumph led; your beauty's slave.
Zara. If I on any terms could condescend
To like captivity, or think those honours
Which conquerors in courtesy bestow,
Of equal value with unborrow'd rule,
And native right to arbitrary sway;
I might be pleased, when I behold this train
With usual homage wait. But when I feel
These bonds, I look with loathing on myself;
And scorn vile slavery, though doubly hid
Beneath mock-praises, and dissembled state.
Man. Those bonds! 'twas my command you should be free.
How durst you, Perez, disobey?
Per. Great sir,
Your order was, she should not wait your triumph;
But at some distance follow, thus attended.
Man. 'Tis false! 'twas more; I bid she should be free:
If not in words, I bid it by my eyes.
Her eyes did more than bid.—Free her and hers
With speed—yet stay—my hands alone can make
Fit restitution here.—Thus I release you,
And by releasing you, enslave myself.
Zara. Such favours so conferr'd, though when unsought,
Deserve acknowledgment from noble minds.
Such thanks, as one hating to be obliged,
Yet hating more ingratitude, can pay,
I offer.
Man. Born to excel, and to command!
As by transcendent beauty to attract
All eyes, so by pre-eminence of soul
To rule all hearts.
Garcia, what's he, who with contracted brow
[*Beholding* OSMYN *as they unbind him.*
And sullen port, glooms downward with his eyes;
At once regardless of his chains, or liberty?
Gar. That, sir, is he of whom I spoke; that's Osmyn.
Man. He answers well the character you gave him.
Whence comes it, valiant Osmyn, that a man
So great in arms, as thou art said to be,
So hardly can endure captivity,
The common chance of war?
Osm. Because captivity
Has robb'd me of a dear and just revenge.
Man. I understand not that.
Osm. I would not have you.
Zara. That gallant Moor in battle lost a friend,
Whom more than life he loved; and the regret
Of not revenging on his foes that loss
Has caused this melancholy and despair.
Man. She does excuse him; 'tis as I suspected.
[*To* GONSALEZ.
Gon. That friend may be herself; seem not to heed
His arrogant reply: she looks concern'd.

Man. I'll have inquiry made; perhaps his friend
Yet lives, and is a prisoner. His name?
Zara. Heli.
Man. Garcia, that search shall be your care:
It shall be mine to pay devotion here;
At this fair shrine to lay my laurels down,
And raise Love's altar on the spoils of war.
Conquest and triumph, now, are mine no more:
Nor will I victory in camps adore:
For, lingering there, in long suspense she stands,
Shifting the prize in unresolving hands:
Unused to wait, I broke through her delay,
Fix'd her by force, and snatch'd the doubtful day.
Now late I find that war is but her sport;
In love the goddess keeps her awful court:
Fickle in fields, unsteadily she flies,
But rules with settled sway in Zara's eyes.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Aisle of a Temple.*

GARCIA, HELI, *and* PEREZ.

Gar. This way, we're told, Osmyn was seen to walk;
Choosing this lonely mansion of the dead,
To mourn, brave Heli, thy mistaken fate.
Heli. Let Heaven with thunder to the centre strike me,
If to arise in very deed from death,
And to revisit with my long-closed eyes
This living light, could to my soul, or sense,
Afford a thought, or show a glimpse of joy,
In least proportion to the vast delight
I feel, to hear of Osmyn's name; to hear
That Osmyn lives, and I again shall see him!
Gar. I've heard, with admiration, of your friendship.
Per. Yonder, my lord, behold the noble Moor.
Heli. Where? where?
Gar. I saw him not, nor any like him.
Per. I saw him, when I spoke, thwarting my view,
And striding with distemper'd haste; his eyes
Seem'd flame, and flash'd upon me with a glance;
Then forward shot their fires, which he pursued,
As to some object frightful, yet not fear'd.
Gar. Let's haste to follow him, and know the cause.
Heli. My lord, let me entreat you to forbear:
Leave me alone to find, and cure the cause.
I know his melancholy, and such starts
Are usual to his temper. It might raise him
To act some violence upon himself,
So to be caught in an unguarded hour,
And when his soul gives all her passions way
Secure and loose in friendly solitude.
I know his noble heart would burst with shame,
To be surprised by strangers in its frailty.
Gar. Go, generous Heli, and relieve your friend.
Far be it from me, officiously to pry
Or press upon the privacies of others.

SCENE II.

GARCIA *and* PEREZ.

Gar. Perez, the king expects from our return
To have his jealousy confirm'd or clear'd,
Of that appearing love which Zara bears
To Osmyn; but some other opportunity
Must make that plain.
Per. To me 'twas long since plain,
And every look from him and her confirms it.
Gar. If so, unhappiness attends their love,
And I could pity 'em. I hear some coming.
The friends perhaps are met; let us avoid 'em.

SCENE III.

ALMERIA *and* LEONORA.

Alm. It was a fancied noise, for all is hush'd.
Leon. It bore the accent of a human voice.
Alm. It was thy fear, or else some transient wind
Whistling through hollows of this vaulted aisle.
We'll listen.
Leon. Hark!
Alm. No, all is hush'd, and still as death.—'Tis dreadful!
How reverend is the face of this tall pile,
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its arch'd and ponderous roof,
By its own weight made steadfast and immoveable,
Looking tranquillity! It strikes an awe
And terror on my aching sight; the tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart.
Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice;
Nay, quickly speak to me, and let me hear
Thy voice—my own affrights me with its echoes.
Leon. Let us return; the horror of this place,
And silence, will increase your melancholy.
Alm. It may my fears, but cannot add to that.
No, I will on; show me Anselmo's tomb,
Lead me o'er bones and sculls and mouldering earth
Of human bodies; for I'll mix with them.
Or wind me in the shroud of some pale corse
Yet green in earth, rather than be the bride
Of Garcia's more detested bed: that thought
Exerts my spirits; and my present fears
Are lost in dread of greater ill. Then show me,
Lead me, for I am bolder grown: lead on
Where I may kneel, and pay my vows again
To him, to Heaven, and my Alphonso's soul.
Leon. I go: but Heaven can tell with what regret.

SCENE IV.

The Scene opening discovers a place of tombs. One monument fronting the view greater than the rest.

HELI.

I wander through this maze of monuments,
Yet cannot find him.—Hark! sure 'tis the voice
Of one complaining.—There it sounds: I'll follow it.

SCENE V.

ALMERIA *and* LEONORA.

Leon. Behold the sacred vault, within whose womb
The poor remains of good Anselmo rest;
Yet fresh and unconsumed by time or worms!
What do I see? O Heaven! either my eyes
Are false, or still the marble door remains
Unclosed: the iron gates that lead to death
Beneath, are still wide-stretch'd upon their hinge,
And staring on us with unfolded leaves.

Alm. Sure 'tis the friendly yawn of death for me;
And that dumb mouth, significant in show,
Invites me to the bed where I alone
Shall rest; shows me the grave, where nature, weary
And long oppress'd with woes and bending cares,
May lay the burden down, and sink in slumbers
Of peace eternal. Death, grim death, will fold
Me in his leaden arms, and press me close
To his cold clayey breast; my father then
Will cease his tyranny; and Garcia too
Will fly my pale deformity with loathing.
My soul, enlarged from its vile bonds, will mount,
And range the starry orbs, and milky ways,
Of that refulgent world, where I shall swim
In liquid light, and float on seas of bliss
To my Alphonso's soul. O joy too great!
O ecstacy of thought! Help me, Anselmo;
Help me, Alphonso: take me, reach thy hand;
To thee, to thee I call, to thee, Alphonso:
O Alphonso!

SCENE VI.

ALMERIA, LEONORA; OSMYN *ascending from the tomb.*

Osm. Who calls that wretched thing that was Alphonso?

Alm. Angels, and all the host of heaven, support me!

Osm. Whence is that voice, whose shrillness, from the grave,
And growing to his father's shroud, roots up
Alphonso?

Alm. Mercy! providence! O speak!
Speak to it quickly, quickly! speak to me,
Comfort me, help me, hold me, hide me, hide me,
Leonora, in thy bosom, from the light,
And from my eyes!

Osm. Amazement and illusion!
Rivet and nail me where I stand, ye powers;
[*Coming forward.*
That motionless I may be still deceived.
Let me not stir, nor breathe, lest I dissolve
That tender, lovely form of painted air,
So like Almeria. Ha! it sinks, it falls;
I'll catch it ere it goes, and grasp her shade.
'Tis life! 'tis warm! 'tis she! 'tis she herself!
Nor dead nor shade, but breathing and alive!
It is Almeria, 'tis, it is my wife!

SCENE VII.

ALMERIA, LEONORA, OSMYN, *and* HELI.

Leon. Alas, she stirs not yet, nor lifts her eyes!
He too is fainting.—Help me, help me, stranger,
Whoe'er thou art, and lend thy hand to raise
These bodies.

Heli. Ha! 'tis he! and with Almeria!
O miracle of happiness! O joy
Unhoped for! does Almeria live!

Osm. Where is she?
Let me behold and touch her, and be sure
'Tis she; show me her face, and let me feel
Her lips with mine.—'Tis she, I'm not deceived;
I taste her breath, I warm'd her and am warm'd.
Look up, Almeria, bless me with thy eyes;
Look on thy love, thy lover, and thy husband.

Alm. I've sworn I'll not wed Garcia; why d'ye force me?
Is this a father?

Osm. Look on thy Alphonso.
Thy father is not here, my love, nor Garcia:
Nor am I what I seem, but thy Alphonso.
Wilt thou not know me? Hast thou then forgot me?
Hast thou thy eyes, yet canst not see Alphonso?
Am I so alter'd, or art thou so changed,
That seeing my disguise, thou seest not me?

Alm. It is, it is Alphonso! 'tis his face,
His voice! I know him now, I know him all.
O take me to thy arms, and bear me hence,
Back to the bottom of the boundless deep,
To seas beneath, where thou so long hast dwelt.
O how hast thou return'd? how hast thou charm'd
The wildness of the waves and rocks to this?
That thus relenting, they have given thee back
To earth, to light and life, to love and me.

Osm. Oh I'll not ask, nor answer how, or why
We both have backward trod the paths of fate,
To meet again in life; to know I have thee,
Is knowing more than any circumstance
Or means by which I have thee.
To fold thee thus, to press thy balmy lips,
And gaze upon thy eyes, is so much joy,
I have not leisure to reflect, or know,
Or trifle time in thinking.

Alm. Stay a while—
Let me look on thee, yet a little more.

Osm. What wouldst thou? thou dost put me from thee.

Alm. Yes.

Osm. And why? what dost thou mean? why dost thou gaze so?

Alm. I know not; 'tis to see thy face, I think—
It is too much! too much to bear and live!
To see him thus again is such profusion
Of joy, of bliss—I cannot bear—I must
Be mad—I cannot be transported thus.

Osm. Thou excellence, thou joy, thou heaven of love!

Alm. Where hast thou been? and how art thou alive?

How is all this? All-powerful Heaven, what are we!
O my strain'd heart!—let me again behold thee,
For I weep to see thee.—Art thou not paler?
Much, much; how thou art changed!

Osm. Not in my love.

Alm. No, no, thy griefs, I know, have done this to thee.
Thou hast wept much, Alphonso; and, I fear,
Too much, too tenderly lamented me.

Osm. Wrong not my love, to say too tenderly.
No more, my life; talk not of tears or grief;
Affliction is no more, now thou art found.
Why dost thou weep, and hold thee from my arms;
My arms which ache to fold thee fast, and grow
To thee with twining? Come, come to my heart.

Alm. I will, for I should never look enough.
They would have married me; but I had sworn
To Heaven and thee, and sooner would have died.

Osm. Perfection of all faithfulness and love!

Alm. Indeed I would.—Nay, I would tell thee all,
If I could speak; how I have mourn'd and pray'd;
For I have pray'd to thee as to a saint:
And thou hast heard my prayer; for thou art come
To my distress, to my despair, which Heaven
Could only by restoring thee have cured.

Osm. Grant me but life, good Heaven, but length of days,
To pay some part, some little of this debt,
This countless sum of tenderness and love,
For which I stand engaged to this all-excellence:
Then bear me in a whirlwind to my fate,
Snatch me from life, and cut me short unwarn'd;
Then, then 'twill be enough!—I shall be old,
I shall have lived beyond all eras then
Of yet unmeasured time; when I have made
This exquisite, this most amazing goodness,
Some recompense of love and matchless truth.

Alm. 'Tis more than recompense to see thy face;
If heaven is greater joy, it is no happiness,
For 'tis not to be borne.—What shall I say?
I have a thousand things to know, and ask,
And speak.—That thou art here, beyond all hope,
All thought; that all at once thou art before me,
And with such suddenness hast hit my sight,
Is such surprise, such mystery, such ecstacy;
It hurries all my soul, and stuns my sense.
Sure from thy father's tomb thou didst arise.

Osm. I did; and thou, my love, didst call me; thou.

Alm. True; but how camest thou there? wert thou alone?

Osm. I was, and lying on my father's lead,
When broken echoes of a distant voice
Disturb'd the sacred silence of the vault,
In murmurs round my head. I rose and listen'd,
And thought I heard thy spirit call Alphonso;
I thought I saw thee too; but Oh, I thought not
That I indeed should be so blest to see thee!

Alm. But still, how camest thou hither? how thus?—Ha!
What's he, who like thyself is started here
Ere seen?

Osm. Where? ha! what do I see? Antonio?
I'm fortunate indeed!—my friend too, safe!

Heli. Most happily, in finding you thus bless'd.

Alm. More miracles! Antonio too escaped!

Osm. And twice escaped, both from the rage of seas
And war: for in the fight I saw him fall.

Heli. But fell unhurt, a prisoner as yourself,
And as yourself made free; hither I came
Impatiently to seek you, where I knew
Your grief would lead you, to lament Anselmo.

Osm. There are no wonders, or else all is wonder.

Heli. I saw you on the ground, and raised you up:
When with astonishment I saw Almeria.

Osm. I saw her too, and therefore saw not thee.

Alm. Nor I; nor could I, for my eyes were yours.

Osm. What means the bounty of all-gracious Heaven,
That persevering still, with open hand,
It scatters good, as in a waste of mercy!
Where will this end! but Heaven is infinite
In all, and can continue to bestow,
When scanty number shall be spent in telling.

Leon. Or I'm deceived, or I beheld the glimpse
Of two in shining habits cross the aisle;
Who by their pointing seem to mark this place.

Alm. Sure I have dreamt, if we must part so soon.

Osm. I wish, at least, our parting were a dream,
Or we could sleep till we again were met.

Heli. Zara with Selim, sir; I saw and know 'em;
You must be quick, for love will lend her wings.

Alm. What love? who is she? why are you alarm'd?

Osm. She's the reverse of thee; she's my unhappiness.
Harbour no thought that may disturb thy peace;
But gently take thyself away, lest she
Should come, and see the straining of my eyes
To follow thee. I'll think how we may meet
To part no more. My friend will tell thee all;
How I escaped, how I am here, and thus;
How I'm not call'd Alphonso, now, but Osmyn;
And he Heli. All, all he will unfold,
Ere next we meet.

Alm. Sure, we shall meet again—

Osm. We shall: we part not but to meet again.
Gladness and warmth of ever-kindling love
Dwell with thee, and revive thy heart in absence.

SCENE VIII.

OSMYN.

Yet I behold her—yet—and now no more.
Turn your lights inward, eyes, and view my thought,
So shall you still behold her—'twill not be.
O impotence of sight! mechanic sense,
Which to exterior objects owest thy faculty,
Not seeing of election, but necessity.
Thus do our eyes, as do all common mirrors,
Successively reflect succeeding images;
Not what they would, but must; a star, or toad:
Just as the hand of chance administers.
Not so the mind, whose undetermin'd view
Revolves, and to the present adds the past:
Essaying further to futurity;
But that in vain. I have Almeria here—
At once, as I before have seen her often—

SCENE IX.

ZARA, SELIM, *and* OSMYN.

Zara. See where he stands, folded and fix'd to earth,
Stiffening in thought a statue among statues!
Why, cruel Osmyn, dost thou fly me thus?
Is it well done? Is this then the return
For fame, for honour, and for empire lost?
But what is loss of honour, fame and empire!
Is this the recompense reserved for love;
Why dost thou leave my eyes, and fly my arms,
To find this place of horror and obscurity?
Am I more loathsome to thee than the grave,
That thou dost seek to shield thee there, and shun
My love? But to the grave I'll follow thee.—
He looks not, minds not, hears not.—Barbarous man,
Am I neglected thus? am I despised?
Not heard? ungrateful Osmyn!

Osm. Ha, 'tis Zara!

Zara. Yes, traitor! Zara, lost, abandon'd Zara,
Is a regardless suppliant, now, to Osmyn.
The slave, the wretch that she redeem'd from death,
Disdains to listen now, or look on Zara.

Osm. Far be the guilt of such reproaches from me;
Lost in myself, and blinded by my thoughts,
I saw you not, till now.

Zara. Now then you see me—
But with such dumb and thankless eyes you look,
Better I was unseen, than seen thus coldly.

Osm. What would you from a wretch who came to mourn,
And only for his sorrows chose this solitude?
Look round; joy is not here, nor cheerfulness.
You have pursued misfortune to its dwelling,
Yet look for gaiety and gladness there.

Zara. Inhuman! why, why dost thou rack me thus?
And with perverseness from the purpose answer?
What is't to me, this house of misery?
What joy do I require? If thou dost mourn,
I come to mourn with thee; to share thy griefs,
And give thee, for 'em, in exchange my love.

Osm. O that's the greatest grief!—I am so poor,
I have not wherewithal to give again.

Zara. Thou hast a heart, though 'tis a savage one;
Give it me as it is; I ask no more
For all I've done, and all I have endured;
For saving thee, when I beheld thee first,
Driven by the tide upon my country's coast,
Pale and expiring, drench'd in briny waves,
Thou and thy friend, till my compassion found thee;
Compassion! scarce will't own that name, so soon,
So quickly was it love; for thou wert godlike
Even then. Kneeling on earth, I loosed my hair,
And with it dried thy wat'ry cheeks; then chafed
Thy temples, till reviving blood arose,
And like the morn vermilion'd o'er thy face.
O Heaven! how did my heart rejoice and ache,
When I beheld the day-break of thy eyes,
And felt the balm of thy respiring lips!

Osm. O call not to my mind what you have done;
It sets a debt of that account before me,
Which shows me poor, and bankrupt even in hopes.

Zara. The faithful Selim and my women know
The dangers which I tempted to conceal you.
You know how I abused the credulous king;
What arts I used to make you pass on him,
When he received you as the Prince of Fez;
And as my kinsman, honour'd and advanced you.
Oh, why do I relate what I have done?
What did I not? Was't not for you this war
Commenced? not knowing who you were, nor why
You hated Manuel, I urged my husband
To this invasion; where he late was lost,
Where all is lost, and I am made a slave.
Look on me now, from empire fallen to slavery;
Think on my sufferings first, then look on me;
Think on the cause of all, then view thyself:
Reflect on Osmyn, and then look on Zara,
The fallen, the lost, and now the captive Zara,
And now abandon'd—say, what then is Osmyn?

Osm. A fatal wretch—a huge stupendous ruin,
That tumbling on its prop, crush'd all beneath,
And bore contiguous palaces to earth.

Zara. Yet thus, thus fallen, thus levell'd with the vilest,
If I have gain'd thy love, 'tis glorious ruin;
Ruin! 'tis still to reign, and to be more
A queen; for what are riches, empire, power,
But larger means to gratify the will?
The steps on which we tread, to rise, and reach
Our wish; and that obtain'd, down with the scaffolding
Of sceptres, crowns, and thrones! they've served their end,
And are, like lumber, to be left and scorn'd.

Osm. Why was I made the instrument to throw
In bonds the frame of this exalted mind?

Zara. We may be free; the conqueror is mine;
In chains unseen I hold him by the heart,
And can unwind or strain him as I please.
Give me thy love, I'll give thee liberty.

Osm. In vain you offer, and in vain require
What neither can bestow: set free yourself,
And leave a slave the wretch that would be so.

Zara. Thou canst not mean so poorly as thou talk'st.

Osm. Alas! you know me not.

Zara. Not who thou art:
But what this last ingratitude declares,
This grovelling baseness—Thou say'st true, I know
Thee not, for what thou art yet wants a name:
But something so unworthy, and so vile,
That to have loved thee makes me yet more lost,
Than all the malice of my other fate.
Traitor! monster! cold and perfidious slave!
A slave, not daring to be free! nor dares
To love above him, for 'tis dangerous:
'Tis that I know; for thou dost look, with eyes
Sparkling desire, and trembling to possess.
I know my charms have reach'd thy very soul,
And thrill'd thee through with darted fires; but thou
Dost fear so much, thou darest not wish. The king!
There, there's the dreadful sound, the king's thy rival!

Sel. Madam, the king is here, and entering now.

Zara. As I could wish; by Heaven I'll be revenged!

SCENE X.

ZARA, OSMYN, SELIM, MANUEL, PEREZ, *and* Attendants.

Man. Why does the fairest of her kind withdraw
Her shining from the day, to gild this scene
Of death and night? Ha! what disorder's this?
Somewhat I heard of king and rival mention'd.
What's he that dares be rival to the king?
Or lift his eyes to like, where I adore?

Zara. There, he; your prisoner, and that was my slave.

Man. How? Better than my hopes! does she accuse him? [*Aside.*

Zara. Am I become so low by my captivity,
And do your arms so lessen what they conquer,
That Zara must be made the sport of slaves?
And shall the wretch, whom yester sun beheld
Waiting my nod, the creature of my power,
Presume to-day to plead audacious love,
And build bold hopes on my dejected fate?

Man. Better for him to tempt the rage of Heaven,
And wrench the bolt red-hissing from the hand
Of him that thunders, than but think that insolence.
'Tis daring for a god. Hence, to the wheel
With that Ixion, who aspires to hold
Divinity embraced! to whips and prisons
Drag him with speed, and rid me of his face.
[Guards *seize* OSMYN.

Zara. Compassion led me to bemoan his state,
Whose former faith had merited much more;
And through my hopes in you, I undertook
He should be set at large; thence sprung his insolence,
And what was charity he construed love.

Man. Enough; his punishment be what you please.
But let me lead you from this place of sorrow,
To one, where young delights attend; and joys
Yet new, unborn, and blooming in the bud,
Which wait to be full-blown at your approach,
And spread like roses to the morning sun:
Where every hour shall roll in circling joys,
And love shall wing the tedious-wasting day:
Life without love is load; and time stands still:
What we refuse to him, to death we give;
And then, then only, when we love, we live.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Prison.*

OSMYN *alone, with a paper.*

But now, and I was closed within the tomb
That holds my father's ashes; and but now,
Where he was prisoner, I am too imprison'd.
Sure 'tis the hand of Heaven that leads me thus,
And for some purpose points out these remembrances.
In a dark corner of my cell I found
This paper, what it is this light will show.
If my Alphonso—ha! [*Reading.*
If my Alphonso live, restore him, Heaven;
Give me more weight, crush my declining years
With bolts, with chains, imprisonment and want;
But bless my son, visit not him for me.
It is his hand; this was his prayer—yet more:
Let every hair, which sorrow by the roots [*Reading.*
Tears from my hoary and devoted head,
Be doubled in thy mercies to my son:
Not for myself, but him, hear me, all gracious—
'Tis wanting what should follow—*Heaven* should follow,
But 'tis torn off—Why should that word alone
Be torn from his petition? 'Twas to Heaven,
But Heaven was deaf, Heaven heard him not; but thus,
Thus as the name of Heaven from this is torn,
So did it tear the ears of mercy from
His voice, shutting the gates of prayer against him.
If piety be thus debarr'd access
On high, and of good men the very best
Is singled out to bleed, and bear the scourge,
What is reward? or what is punishment?
But who shall dare to tax eternal justice?
Yet I may think—I may, I must; for thought
Precedes the will to think, and error lives
Ere reason can be born. Reason, the power
To guess at right and wrong, the twinkling lamp
Of wandering life, that winks and wakes by turns,
Fooling the follower, betwixt shade and shining.
What noise! Who's there? My friend! how camest thou hither?

SCENE II.

OSMYN *and* HELI.

Heli. The time's too precious to be spent in telling;
The captain, influenced by Almeria's power,
Gave order to the guards for my admittance.

Osm. How does Almeria? But I know she is
As I am. Tell me, may I hope to see her?

Heli. You may: anon, at midnight when the king
Is gone to rest, and Garcia is retired,
(Who takes the privilege to visit late,
Presuming on a bridegroom's right,) she'll come.

Osym. She'll come! 'tis what I wish, yet what I fear.
She'll come; but whither, and to whom? O Heaven!
To a vile prison, and a captived wretch;
To one, whom had she never known, she had
Been happy. Why, why was that heavenly creature
Abandon'd o'er to love what Heaven forsakes?
Why does she follow, with unwearied steps,
One who has tired misfortune with pursuing?
One, driven about the world like blasted leaves
And chaff, the sport of adverse winds; till late
At length, imprison'd in some cleft of rock,
Or earth, it rests, and rots to silent dust.

Heli. Have hopes, and hear the voice of better fate.
I've learn'd there are disorders ripe for mutiny
Among the troops, who thought to share the plunder,
Which Manuel to his own use and avarice
Converts. This news has reach'd Valentia's frontiers;
Where many of your subjects, long oppress'd
With tyranny and grievous impositions,
Are risen in arms, and call for chiefs to head
And lead 'em to regain their rights and liberty.

Osm. By Heaven thou'st roused me from my lethargy!
The spirit which was deaf to my own wrongs,
And the loud cries of my dead father's blood;
Deaf to revenge—nay, which refused to hear
The piercing sighs and murmurs of my love
Yet unenjoy'd; what not Almeria could
Revive, or raise, my people's voice has waken'd.
O my Antonio, I am all on fire,
My soul is up in arms, ready to charge
And bear amidst the foe, with conquering troops.
I hear 'em call to lead 'em on to liberty,
To victory; their shouts and clamours rend
My ears, and reach the Heavens: Where is the king?
Where is Alphonso?—Ha! Where, where indeed!
Oh I could tear and burst the strings of life,
To break these chains! Off, off, ye stains of royalty!
Off, slavery! O curse! that I alone
Can beat and flutter in my cage, when I
Would soar and stoop at victory beneath.

Heli. Our posture of affairs, and scanty time,
My lord, require you should compose yourself,
And think on what we may reduce to practice.
Zara, the cause of your restraint, may be
The means of liberty restored. That gain'd,
Occasion will not fail to point out ways
For your escape. Meantime, I've thought already
With speed and safety to convey myself
Where not far off some malcontents hold council
Nightly; who hate this tyrant; some, who love
Anselmo's memory, and will, for certain,
When they shall know you live, assist your cause.

Osm. My friend and counsellor, as thou think'st fit,
So do. I will with patience wait my fortune.

Heli. When Zara comes, abate of your aversion.

Osm. I hate her not, nor can dissemble love:
But as I may, I'll do. I have a paper
Which I would show thee, friend, but that the sight
Would hold thee here, and clog thy expedition.
Within I found it, by my father's hand
'Twas writ; a prayer for me, wherein appears
Paternal love prevailing o'er his sorrows;
Such sanctity, such tenderness so mix'd
With grief as would draw tears from inhumanity.

Heli. The care of Providence sure left it there,
To arm your mind with hope. Such piety
Was never heard in vain: Heaven has in store
For you those blessings it withheld from him.
In that assurance live; which time, I hope,
And our next meeting will confirm.

Osm. Farewell,
My friend; the good thou dost deserve attend thee.

SCENE III.

OSMYN.

I've been to blame, and question'd with impiety
The care of Heaven. Not so my father bore
More anxious grief. This should have better taught me;
This lesson, in some hour of inspiration,
By him set down; when his pure thoughts were borne,
Like fumes of sacred incense, o'er the clouds,
And wafted thence on angels' wings, through ways
Of light, to the bright Source of all. For there
He in the book of prescience saw this day;
And waking, to the world, and mortal sense,
Left this example of his resignation,
This his last legacy to me, which, here,
I'll treasure as more worth than diadems,
Or all extended rule of regal power.

SCENE IV.

OSMYN, ZARA *veiled.*

Osm. What brightness breaks upon me thus through shades,
And promises a day to this dark dwelling?
Is it my love?—

Zara. O that thy heart had taught
Thy tongue that saying. [*Lifting up her veil.*

Osm. Zara! I am betray'd
By my surprise. [*Aside.*

Zara. What, does my face displease thee?
That having seen it, thou dost turn thy eyes
Away, as from deformity and horror.
If so, this sable curtain shall again
Be drawn, and I will stand before thee seeing,
And unseen. *Is it my love?* ask again
That question, speak again in that soft voice,
And look again with wishes in thy eyes.
O no, thou canst not, for thou seest me now,
As she whose savage breast has been the cause
Of these thy wrongs; as she whose barbarous rage
Has loaden thee with chains and galling irons:
Well dost thou scorn me, and upbraid my falseness;
Could one who loved, thus torture whom she loved?
No, no, it must be hatred, dire revenge,
And detestation, that could use thee thus.
So thou dost think; then do but tell me so;
Tell me, and thou shalt see how I'll revenge
Thee on this false one, how I'll stab and tear
This heart of flint till it shall bleed; and thou
Shalt weep for mine, forgetting thy own miseries.

Osm. You wrong me, beauteous Zara, to believe
I bear my fortunes with so low a mind,
As still to meditate revenge on all
Whom chance, or fate, working by secret causes,
Has made perforce subservient to that end
The heavenly powers allot me; no, not you,
But destiny and inauspicious stars
Have cast me down to this low being: or,
Granting you had, from you I have deserved it.

Zara. Canst thou forgive me then? wilt thou believe
So kindly of my fault, to call it madness?
O, give that madness yet a milder name,
And call it passion; then, be still more kind,
And call that passion love.
Osm. Give it a name,
Or being as you please, such I will think it.
Zara. O thou dost wound me more with this thy goodness,
Than e'er thou couldst with bitterest reproaches!
Thy anger could not pierce thus to my heart.
Osm. Yet I could wish—
Zara. Haste me to know it: what?
Osm. That at this time I had not been this thing.
Zara. What thing?
Osm. This slave.
Zara. O Heaven! my fears interpret
This thy silence: somewhat of high concern,
Long fashioning within thy labouring mind,
And now just ripe for birth, my rage has ruin'd.
Have I done this? Tell me, am I so cursed?
Osm. Time may have still one fated hour to come,
Which, wing'd with liberty, might overtake
Occasion past.
Zara. Swift as occasion, I
Myself will fly; and earlier than the morn
Wake thee to freedom. Now 'tis late; and yet
Some news few minutes past arrived which seem'd
To shake the temper of the king.—Who knows
What racking cares disease a monarch's bed?
Or love, that late at night still lights his lamp,
And strikes his rays through dusk, and folded lids,
Forbidding rest, may stretch his eyes awake,
And force their balls abroad at this dead hour.
I'll try.
Osm. I have not merited this grace;
Nor, should my secret purpose take effect,
Can I repay, as you require, such benefits.
Zara. Thou canst not owe me more, nor have I more
To give, than I've already lost. But now,
So does the form of our engagements rest,
Thou hast the wrong, till I redeem thee hence;
That done, I leave thy justice to return
My love. Adieu.

SCENE V.

OSMYN.

This woman has a soul
Of godlike mould, intrepid and commanding,
And challenges, in spite of me, my best
Esteem; to this she's fair, few more can boast
Of personal charms, or with less vanity
Might hope to captivate the hearts of kings.
But she has passions which outstrip the wind,
And tear her virtues up, as tempests root
The sea. I fear when she shall know the truth,
Some swift and dire event of her blind rage
Will make all fatal. But behold she comes
For whom I fear, to shield me from my fears,
The cause and comfort of my boding heart.

SCENE VI.

ALMERIA *and* OSMYN.

Osm. My life, my health, my liberty, my all!
How shall I welcome thee to this sad place?
How speak to thee the words of joy and transport?
How run into thy arms, withheld by fetters;
Or take thee into mine, while I'm thus manacled
And pinion'd like a thief or murderer?
Shall I not hurt and bruise thy tender body,
And stain thy bosom with the rust of these
Rude irons? Must I meet thee thus, Almeria?
Alm. Thus, thus; we parted, thus to meet again.
Thou told'st me thou wouldst think how we might meet
To part no more.—Now we will part no more;
For these thy chains, or death, shall join us ever.
Osm. Hard means to ratify that word!—O cruelty!
That ever I should think beholding thee
A torture!—Yet, such is the bleeding anguish
Of my heart, to see thy sufferings.—O Heaven!
That I could almost turn my eyes away,
Or wish thee from my sight.
Alm. O, say not so!
Though 'tis because thou lovest me. Do not say,
On any terms, that thou dost wish me from thee.
No, no, 'tis better thus, that we together
Feed on each other's heart, devour our woes
With mutual appetite; and mingling in
One cup the common stream of both our eyes,
Drink bitter draughts, with never-slaking thirst.
Thus better, than for any cause to part.
What dost thou think? Look not so tenderly
Upon me—speak, and take me in thy arms,—
Thou canst not! thy poor arms are bound, and strive
In vain with the remorseless chains which gnaw
And eat into thy flesh, festering thy limbs
With rankling rust.
Osm. Oh! Oh!
Alm. Give me that sigh.
Why dost thou heave, and stifle in thy griefs?
Thy heart will burst, thy eyes look red and start;
Give thy soul way, and tell me thy dark thought.
Osm. For this world's rule I would not wound thy breast
With such a dagger as then stuck my heart.
Alm. Why? why? to know it cannot wound me more,
Than knowing thou hast felt it. Tell it me.
Thou givest me pain with too much tenderness.
Osm. And thy excessive love distracts my sense!
O wouldst thou be less killing, soft or kind,
Grief could not double thus his darts against me.
Alm. Thou dost me wrong, and grief too robs my heart,
If there he shoot not every other shaft;
Thy second self should feel each other wound,
And woe should be in equal portions dealt.
I am thy wife—
Osm. O thou hast search'd too deep!
There, there I bleed! there pull the cruel cords,
That strain my cracking nerves; engines and wheels,
That piece-meal grind, are beds of down and balm
To that soul-racking thought.
Alm. Then I am cursed
Indeed, if that be so; if I'm thy torment,

Kill me, then kill me; dash me with thy chains,
Tread on me! What! am I the bosom-snake,
That sucks thy warm life-blood, and gnaws thy heart?
O that thy words had force to break those bonds,
As they have strength to tear this heart in sunder!
So shouldst thou be at large from all oppression.
Am I, am I of all thy woes the worst?

Osm. My all of bliss, my everlasting life,
Soul of my soul, and end of all my wishes,
Why dost thou thus unman me with thy words,
And melt me down to mingle with thy weepings?
Why dost thou ask? why dost thou talk thus piercingly?
Thy sorrows have disturb'd thy peace of mind,
And thou dost speak of miseries impossible.

Alm. Didst thou not say that racks and wheels were balm,
And beds of ease, to thinking me thy wife?

Osm. No, no; nor should the subtlest pains that hell,
Or hell-born malice can invent, extort
A wish or thought from me, to have thee other.
But thou wilt know what harrows up my heart:
Thou art my wife—nay, thou art yet my bride!
The sacred union of connubial love
Yet unaccomplish'd; his mysterious rites
Delay'd; nor has our hymeneal torch
Yet lighted up his last most grateful sacrifice;
But dash'd with rain from eyes, and swaled with sighs,
Burns dim, and glimmers with expiring light.
Is this dark cell a temple for that god?
Or this vile earth an altar for such offerings?
This den for slaves, this dungeon damp'd with woes;
Is this our marriage-bed? Are these our joys?
Is this to call thee mine? Oh, hold my heart!
To call thee mine? Yes; thus, even thus to call
Thee mine, were comfort, joy, extremest ecstacy.
But O, thou art not mine, not even in misery!
And 'tis denied to me to be so bless'd,
As to be wretched with thee.

Alm. No; not that
The extremest malice of our fate can hinder:
That still is left us, and on that we'll feed,
As on the leavings of calamity.
There we will feast, and smile on past distress,
And hug, in scorn of it, our mutual ruin.

Osm. O thou dost talk, my love, as one resolved
Because not knowing danger. But look forward;
Think on to-morrow, when thou shalt be torn
From these weak, struggling, unextended arms;
Think how my heart will heave, and eyes will strain,
To grasp and reach what is denied my hands;
Think how the blood will start, and tears will gush
To follow thee, my separating soul!
Think how I am when thou shalt wed with Garcia!
Then will I smear these walls with blood, disfigure
And dash my face, and rive my clotted hair,
Break on the flinty floor my throbbing breast,
And grovel with gash'd hands to scratch a grave,
Stripping my nails, to tear this pavement up,
And bury me alive.

Alm. Heart-breaking horror!

Osm. Then Garcia shall lie panting on thy bosom,
Luxurious revelling amidst thy charms;
And thou perforce must yield, and aid his transport.
Hell! hell! have I not cause to rage and rave?
What are all racks, and wheels, and whips to this?
Are they not soothing softness, sinking ease,
And wafting air to this! O my Almeria!
What do the damn'd endure, but to despair,
But knowing heaven, to know it lost for ever?

Alm. O, I am struck; thy words are bolts of ice,
Which shot into my breast, now melt and chill me.
I chatter, shake, and faint, with thrilling fears.
No, hold me not—O let us not support,
But sink each other, deeper yet, down, down,
Where levell'd low, no more we'll lift our eyes,
But prone, and dumb, rot the firm face of earth
With rivers of incessant scalding rain.

SCENE VII.

ZARA, PEREZ, SELIM, OSMYN, *and* ALMERIA.

Zara. Somewhat of weight to me requires his freedom.
Dare you dispute the king's command? Behold
The royal signet.

Per. I obey; yet beg
Your majesty one moment to defer
Your entering, till the princess is return'd
From visiting the noble prisoner.

Zara. Ha!
What say'st thou?

Osm. We are lost! undone! discover'd!
Retire, my life, with speed.—Alas, we're seen!
Speak of compassion, let her hear you speak
Of interceding for me with the king!
Say somewhat quickly to conceal our loves,
If possible—

Alm. I cannot speak.

Osm. Let me
Conduct you forth, as not perceiving her,
But till she's gone, then bless me thus again.

Zara. Trembling and weeping as he leads her forth!
Confusion in his face, and grief in hers!
'Tis plain I've been abused—Death and destruction!
How shall I search into this mystery?
The bluest blast of pestilential air
Strike, damp, deaden her charms, and kill his eyes!
Perdition catch 'em both, and ruin part 'em!

Osm. This charity to one unknown, and thus
[*Aloud to* ALMERIA *as she goes out.*
Distress'd, Heaven will repay; all thanks are poor.

SCENE VIII.

ZARA, SELIM, *and* OSMYN.

Zara. Damn'd, damn'd dissembler! yet I will be calm,
Choke in my rage, and know the utmost depth
Of this deceiver.—You seem much surprised.

Osm. At your return so soon and unexpected!

Zara. And so unwish'd, unwanted too it seems.
Confusion! yet I will contain myself.
You're grown a favourite since last we parted;
Perhaps I'm saucy and intruding—

Osm. Madam!
Zara. I did not know the princess' favourite;
Your pardon, sir—mistake me not; you think
I'm angry; you're deceived. I came to set
You free: but shall return much better pleased,
To find you have an interest superior.
Osm. You do not come to mock my miseries?
Zara. I do.
Osm. I could at this time spare your mirth.
Zara. I know thou couldst: but I'm not often pleased,
And will indulge it now. What miseries?
Who would not be thus happily confined,
To be the care of weeping majesty?
To have contending queens, at dead of night,
Forsake their down, to wake with wat'ry eyes,
And watch like tapers o'er your hours of rest?
O curse! I cannot hold—
Osm. Come, 'tis too much.
Zara. Villain!
Osm. How, madam!
Zara. Thou shalt die.
Osm. I thank you.
Zara. Thou liest! for now I know for whom thou'dst live.
Osm. Then you may know for whom I'd die.
Zara. Hell! hell!—
Yet I'll be calm—Dark and unknown betrayer!
But now the dawn begins, and the slow hand
Of Fate is stretch'd to draw the veil, and leave
Thee bare, the naked mark of public view.
Osm. You may be still deceived, 'tis in my power—
Zara. Who waits there? As you'll answer it, look this slave [*To the* Guard.
Attempt no means to make himself away.
I've been deceived. The public safety now
Requires he should be more confined, and none,
No, not the princess, suffer'd or to see
Or speak with him: I'll quit you to the king.
Vile and ingrate! too late thou shalt repent
The base injustice thou hast done my love:
Yes, thou shalt know, spite of thy past distress,
And all those ills which thou so long hast mourn'd;
Heaven has no rage, like love to hatred turn'd,
Nor hell a fury, like a woman scorn'd. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room of State in the Palace.*

ZARA *and* SELIM.

Zara. Thou hast already rack'd me with thy stay,
Therefore require me not to ask thee twice;
Reply at once to all. What is concluded?
Sel. Your accusation highly has incensed
The king, and were alone enough to urge
The fate of Osmyn; but to that, fresh news
Is since arrived of more revolted troops.
'Tis certain Heli too is fled, and with him
(Which breeds amazement and distraction) some
Who bore high offices of weight and trust,
Both in the state and army. This confirms
The king, in full belief of all you told him,
Concerning Osmyn and his correspondence
With them who first began the mutiny.
Wherefore a warrant for his death is sign'd,
And order given for public execution.
Zara. Ha! haste thee! fly! prevent his fate and mine;
Find out the king, tell him I have of weight
More than his crown to impart ere Osmyn die.
Sel. It needs not, for the king will straight be here;
And as to your revenge, not his own interest,
Pretend to sacrifice the life of Osmyn.
Zara. What shall I say? Invent, contrive, advise,
Somewhat to blind the king, and save his life
In whom I live. Spite of my rage and pride,
I am a woman, and a lover still.
O, 'tis more grief but to suppose his death,
Than still to meet the rigour of his scorn.
From my despair my anger had its source;
When he is dead I must despair for ever.
For ever! that's despair—it was distrust
Before; distrust will ever be in love,
And anger in distrust, both short-lived pains.
But in despair, and ever-during death,
No term, no bound, but infinite of woe.
O torment, but to think! what then to bear!
Not to be borne.—Devise the means to shun it,
Quick, or by Heaven this dagger drinks thy blood!
Sel. My life is yours, nor wish I to preserve it,
But to serve you. I have already thought.
Zara. Forgive my rage; I know thy love and truth.
But say, what's to be done? or when, or how,
Shall I prevent, or stop the approaching danger?
Sel. You must still seem more resolute and fix'd
On Osmyn's death; too quick a change of mercy
Might breed suspicion of the cause. Advise
That execution may be done in private.
Zara. On what pretence?
Sel. Your own request's enough.
However, for a colour, tell him, you
Have cause to fear his guards may be corrupted,
And some of them bought off to Osmyn's interest
Who, at the place of execution, will
Attempt to force his way for an escape.
The state of things will countenance all suspicions
Then offer to the king to have him strangled
In secret by your mutes, and get an order,
That none but mutes may have admittance to him.
I can no more, the king is here. Obtain
This grant—and I'll acquaint you with the rest.

SCENE II.

MANUEL, GONSALEZ, PEREZ, ZARA, *and* SELIM.

Man. Bear to the dungeon those rebellious slaves,
The ignoble curs, that yelp to fill the cry,
And spend their mouths in barking tyranny.
But for their leaders, Sancho and Ramirez,
Let 'em be led away to present death.—
Perez, see it perform'd.
Gon. Might I presume,
Their execution better were deferr'd,
Till Osmyn die. Meantime we may learn more
Of this conspiracy.
Man. Then be it so.
Stay, soldier; they shall suffer with the Moor.
Are none return'd of those who follow'd Heli?
Gon. None, sir. Some papers have been since discover'd
In Roderigo's house, who fled with him,
Which seem to intimate, as if Alphonso
Were still alive, and arming in Valentia:
Which wears indeed this colour of a truth,
They who are fled have that way bent their course.
Of the same nature divers notes have been
Dispersed to amuse the people; whereupon
Some ready of belief have raised this rumour;
That being saved upon the coast of Afric,
He there disclosed himself to Albucacim,
And by a secret compact made with him,
Open'd and urged the way to this invasion;
While he himself, returning to Valentia
In private, undertook to raise this tumult.
Zara. [*Aside.*] Ha! hear'st thou that? Is Osmyn then Alphonso!
O Heaven! a thousand things occur at once
To my remembrance now, that make it plain.
O certain death for him, as sure despair
For me, if it be known!—if not, what hope
Have I? Yet 'twere the lowest baseness, now
To yield him up.—No, I will still conceal him,
And try the force of yet more obligations.
Gon. 'Tis not impossible. Yet, it may be
That some impostor has usurp'd his name.
Your beauteous captive Zara can inform,
If such a one, so 'scaping, was received
At any time, in Albucacim's court.
Man. Pardon, fair excellence, this long neglect:
An unforeseen, unwelcome hour of business,
Has thrust between us and our while of love;
But wearing now apace with ebbing sand,
Will quickly waste, and give again the day.
Zara. You're too secure; the danger is more imminent
Than your high courage suffers you to see;
While Osmyn lives, you are not safe.
Man. His doom
Is pass'd; if you revoke it not, he dies.
Zara. 'Tis well. By what I heard upon your [entrance,
I find I can unfold what yet concerns
You more. One who did call himself Alphonso
Was cast upon my coast, as is reported,
And oft had private conference with the king;
To what effect I knew not then: but he,
Alphonso, secretly departed, just
About the time our arms embark'd for Spain.
What I know more is, that a triple league
Of strictest friendship was profess'd between
Alphonso, Heli, and the traitor Osmyn.
Man. Public report is ratified in this.
Zara. And Osmyn's death required of strong necessity.
Man. Give order straight that all the prisoners die.
Zara. Forbear a moment; somewhat more I have
Worthy your private ear, and this your minister.
Man. Let all except Gonsalez leave the room.

SCENE III.

MANUEL, GONSALEZ, ZARA, *and* SELIM.

Zara. I am your captive, and you've used me nobly;
And in return of that, though otherwise
Your enemy, I have discover'd Osmyn
His private practice and conspiracy
Against your state: and fully to discharge
Myself of what I've undertaken, now
I think it fit to tell you, that your guards
Are tainted: some among 'em have resolved
To rescue Osmyn at the place of death.
Man. Is treason then so near us as our guards!
Zara. Most certain; though my knowledge is [not yet
So ripe, to point at the particular men.
Man. What's to be done?
Zara. That too I will advise.
I have remaining in my train some mutes,
A present once from the Sultana queen,
In the Grand Signior's court. These from their infancy
Are practised in the trade of death; and shall
(As there the custom is) in private strangle Osmyn.
Gon. My lord, the queen advises well.
Man. What offering or what recompense remains
In me, that can be worthy so great services?
To cast beneath your feet the crown you've saved,
Though on the head that wears it, were too little.
Zara. Of that hereafter; but, meantime, 'tis fit
You give strict charge, that none may be admitted
To see the prisoner, but such mutes as I
Shall send.
Man. Who waits there?

SCENE IV.

MANUEL, GONSALEZ, ZARA, SELIM, *and* PEREZ.

Man. On your life take heed,
That only Zara's mutes, or such who bring
Her warrant, have admittance to the Moor.
Zara. They and no other, not the princess' self.
Per. Your majesty shall be obey'd.
Man. Retire.

SCENE V.

MANUEL, GONSALEZ, ZARA, *and* SELIM.

Gon. [*Aside.*] That interdiction so particular,
Pronounced with vehemence against the princess,
Should have more meaning than appears barefaced:
The king is blinded by his love, and heeds
It not.—[*To* ZARA.] Your majesty sure might have spared
That last restraint; you hardly can suspect
The princess is confederate with the Moor.

Zara. I've heard her charity did once extend
So far, to visit him, at his request.
Gon. Ha!
Man. How? she visit Osmyn! What, my daughter?
Sel. Madam, take heed; or you have ruin'd all.— [*Aside to* ZARA.
Zara. And after did solicit you on his
Behalf.
Man. Never. You have been misinform'd.
Zara. Indeed? Then 'twas a whisper spread by some,
Who wish'd it so; a common art in courts.
I will retire, and instantly prepare
Instruction for my minsters of death.

SCENE VI.

MANUEL *and* GONSALEZ.

Gon. There's somewhat yet of mystery in this;
Her words and actions are obscure and double,
Sometimes concur, and sometimes disagree;
I like it not.
Man. What dost thou think, Gonsalez;
Are we not much indebted to this fair one?
Gon. I am a little slow of credit, sir,
In the sincerity of women's actions.
Methinks this lady's hatred to the Moor
Disquiets her too much; which makes it seem
As if she'd rather that she did not hate him.
I wish her mutes are meant to be employ'd
As she pretends—I doubt it now—Your guards
Corrupted! how? by whom? who told her so?
I'th' evening Osmyn was to die; at midnight
She begg'd the royal signet to release him;
I'th' morning he must die again; ere noon
Her mutes alone must strangle him, or he'll
Escape. This put together suits not well.
Man. Yet, that there's truth in what she has [discover'd,
Is manifest from every circumstance.
This tumult, and the lords who fled with Heli,
Are confirmation:—that Alphonso lives,
Agrees expressly too with her report.
Gon. I grant it, sir; and doubt not, but in rage
Of jealousy, she has discover'd what
She now repents. It may be I'm deceived.
But why that needless caution of the princess?
What if she had seen Osmyn? though 'twere strange.
But if she had, what was't to her? unless
She fear'd her stronger charms might cause the [Moor's
Affection to revolt.
Man. I thank thee, friend.
There's reason in thy doubt, and I am warn'd.
But think'st thou that my daughter saw this Moor?
Gon. If Osmyn be, as Zara has related,
Alphonso's friend; 'tis not impossible,
But she might wish on his account to see him.
Man. Say'st thou? by Heaven thou hast roused a thought,
That like a sudden earthquake shakes my frame:
Confusion! then my daughter's an accomplice,
And plots in private with this hellish Moor.
Gon. That were too hard a thought—but see she [comes:
'Twere not amiss to question her a little,
And try, howe'er, if I've divined aright.
If what I fear be true, she'll be concern'd
For Osmyn's death, as he's Alphonso's friend.
Urge that, to try if she'll solicit for him.

SCENE VII.

MANUEL, GONSALEZ, ALMERIA, *and* LEONORA.

Man. Your coming has prevented me, Almeria;
I had determined to have sent for you.
Let your attendant be dismiss'd; I have [*Exit* LEONORA.
To talk with you. Come near; why dost thou shake?
What mean those swollen and red-fleck'd eyes, that look
As they had wept in blood, and worn the night
In waking anguish? Why this, on the day
Which was design'd to celebrate thy nuptials;
But that the beams of light are to be stain'd
With reeking gore, from traitors on the rack?
Wherefore I have deferr'd the marriage rites;
Nor shall the guilty horrors of this day
Profane that jubilee.
Alm. All days to me
Henceforth are equal; this the day of death,
To-morrow, and the next, and each that follows,
Will undistinguish'd roll, and but prolong
One hated line of more extended woe.
Man. Whence is thy grief? give me to know the cause,
And look thou answer me with truth; for know,
I am not unacquainted with thy falsehood.
Why art thou mute? base and degenerate maid!
Gon. Dear madam, speak, or you'll incense the king.
Alm. What is't to speak? or wherefore should I speak?
What mean these tears, but grief unutterable!
Man. They are the dumb confessions of thy mind,
They mean thy guilt; and say thou wert confederate
With damn'd conspirators to take my life.
O impious parricide! now canst thou speak?
Alm. O earth, behold, I kneel upon thy bosom!
And bend my flowing eyes, to stream upon
Thy face, imploring thee that thou wilt yield;
Open thy bowels of compassion, take
Into thy womb the last and most forlorn
Of all thy race. Hear me, thou common parent!
I have no parent else—be thou a mother,
And step between me and the curse of him
Who was—who was, but is no more a father,
But brands my innocence with horrid crimes;
And for the tender names of child and daughter,
Now calls me murderer and parricide.
Man. Rise, I command thee rise—and if thou wouldst
Acquit thyself of those detested names,
Swear thou hast never seen that foreign dog,
Now doom'd to die, that most accursed Osmyn.
Alm. Never, but as with innocence I might,
And free of all bad purposes. So Heaven's
My witness.
Man. Vile equivocating wretch!
With innocence! O patience! hear—she owns it!
Confesses it! by Heaven I'll have him rack'd!
Torn, mangled, flay'd, impaled!—all pains and tortures
That wit of man and dire revenge can think,
Shall he accumulated under-bear.
Alm. Oh, I am lost!—there fate begins to wound.
Man. Hear me, then; if thou canst, reply; know, traitress,

I'm not to learn that cursed Alphonso lives;
Nor am I ignorant what Osmyn is.

Alm. Then all is ended, and we both must die.
Since thou'rt reveal'd, alone thou shalt not die.
And yet alone would I have died, Heaven knows,
Repeated deaths, rather than have reveal'd thee.
Yes, all my father's wounding wrath, though each
Reproach cuts deeper than the keenest sword,
And cleavės my heart; I would have borne it all,
Nay, all the pains that are prepared for thee:
To the remorseless rack I would have given
This weak and tender flesh, to have been bruised
And torn, rather than have reveal'd thy being.

Man. Hell, hell! do I hear this, and yet endure!
What, darest thou to my face avow thy guilt?
Hence, ere I curse!—fly my just rage with speed;
Lest I forget us both, and spurn thee from me.

Alm. And yet a father! think I am your child.
Turn not your eyes away—look on me kneeling;
Now curse me if you can, now spurn me off.
Did ever father curse his kneeling child?
Never: for always blessings crown that posture.
Nature inclines, and half-way meets that duty,
Stooping to raise from earth the filial reverence;
For bended knees returning folding arms,
With prayers, and blessings, and paternal love.
O hear me then, thus crawling on the earth—

Man. Be thou advised, and let me go, while yet
The light impression thou hast made remains.

Alm. No, never will I rise, nor loose this hold,
Till you are moved, and grant that he may live.

Man. Ha! who may live? take heed, no more of that;
For on my soul he dies, though thou and I,
And all should follow to partake his doom.
Away, off, let me go.—Call her attendants.

[LEONORA *goes out and returns with* Attendants.

Alm. Drag me! harrow the earth with my bare bosom!
I'll not let go till you have spared my husband.

Man. Ha! what say'st thou? husband! husband! damnation!
What husband? which? who!

Alm. He, he is my husband.

Man. Poison and daggers! who?

Alm. Oh! [*Faints.*

Gon. Help, support her.

Alm. Let me go, let me fall, sink deep—I'll dig,
I'll dig a grave, and tear up death; I will;
I'll scrape till I collect his rotten bones,
And clothe their nakedness with my own flesh:
Yes, I will strip off life, and we will change:
I will be death; then though you kill my husband,
He shall be mine, still and for ever mine.

Man. What husband? who? whom dost thou mean?

Gon. She raves!

Alm. O that I did. Osmyn, he is my husband.

Man. Osmyn?

Alm. Not Osmyn, but Alphonso is my dear
And wedded husband.—Heaven, and air, and seas,
Ye winds and waves, I call ye all to witness!

Man. Wilder than winds or waves thyself dost rave.
Should I hear more, I too should catch thy madness.
Yet somewhat she must mean of dire import,
Which I'll not hear, till I am more at peace.
Watch her returning sense, and bring me word;
And look that she attempt not on her life.

SCENE VIII.

ALMERIA, GONSALEZ, LEONORA, *and* Attendants.

Alm. O stay, yet stay! hear me, I am not mad.
I would to Heaven I were!—He's gone.

Gon. Have comfort.

Alm. Cursed be that tongue that bids me be of comfort!
Cursed my own tongue, that could not move his pity!
Cursed these weak hands, that could not hold him here!
For he is gone to doom Alphonso's death.

Gon. Your too excessive grief works on your fancy,
And deludes your sense. Alphonso, if living,
Is far from hence, beyond your father's power.

Alm. Hence, thou detested, ill-timed flatterer!
Source of my woes! thou and thy race be cursed!
But doubly thou, who could alone have policy
And fraud, to find the fatal secret out,
And know that Osmyn was Alphonso!

Gon. Ha!

Alm. Why dost thou start? what dost thou see or hear?
Was it the doleful bell, tolling for death?
Or dying groans from my Alphonso's breast?
See, see, look yonder! where a grizzled, pale,
And ghastly head glares by, all smear'd with blood,
Gasping as it would speak; and after, see!
Behold a damp, dead hand has dropp'd a dagger;
I'll catch it—Hark! a voice cries murder! ah!
My father's voice! hollow it sounds, and calls
Me from the tomb—I'll follow it; for there
I shall again behold my dear Alphonso.

SCENE IX.

GONSALEZ.

She's greatly grieved; nor am I less surprised.
Osmyn Alphonso! no; she over-rates
My policy: I ne'er suspected it:
Nor now had known it, but from her mistake.
Her husband too! ha! where is Garcia then?
And where the crown that should descend on him,
To grace the line of my posterity?
Hold, let me think—if I should tell the king—
Things come to this extremity; his daughter
Wedded already—what if he should yield?
Knowing no remedy for what is past;
And urged by nature pleading for his child,
With which he seems to be already shaken.
And though I know he hates beyond the grave
Anselmo's race; yet if—that if concludes me.
To doubt, when I may be assured, is folly.
But how prevent the captive queen, who means
To set him free? Ay, now 'tis plain; O well
Invented tale! He was Alphonso's friend:
This subtle woman will amuse the king
If I delay.—'Twill do—or better so.—
One to my wish.—Alonzo, thou art welcome.

SCENE X.

GONSALEZ *and* ALONZO.

Alon. The king expects your lordship.
Gon. 'Tis no matter.
I'm not i' the way at present, good Alonzo.
Alon. If't please your lordship, I'll return, and say
I have not seen you.
Gon. Do, my best Alonzo.
Yet stay, I would—but go; anon will serve—
Yet I have that requires thy speedy help.
I think thou wouldst not stop to do me service.
Alon. I am your creature.
Gon. Say thou art my friend.
I've seen thy sword do noble execution.
Alon. All that it can your lordship shall command.
Gon. Thanks; and I take thee at thy word; thou'st seen
Among the followers of the captive queen,
Dumb men, who make their meaning known by signs?
Alon. I have, my lord.
Gon. Couldst thou procure with speed
And privacy, the wearing garb of one
Of those, though purchased by his death, I'd give
Thee such reward as should exceed thy wish.
Alon. Conclude it done. Where shall I wait your lordship?
Gon. At my apartment. Use thy utmost diligence;
And say I've not been seen—haste, good Alonzo.
[*Exit* ALONZO.
So, this can hardly fail. Alphonso slain,
The greatest obstacle is then removed.

Almeria widow'd, yet again may wed;
And I yet fix the crown on Garcia's head. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room of State in the Palace.*

MANUEL, PEREZ, *and* ALONZO.

Man. Not to be found? in an ill hour he's absent.
None, say you, none? what, not the favourite eunuch?
Nor she herself, nor any of her mutes,
Have yet required admittance?
Per. None, my lord.
Man. Is Osmyn so disposed as I commanded?
Per. Fast bound in double chains, and at full length,
He lies supine on earth; with as much ease
She might remove the centre of this earth,
As loose the rivets of his bonds.
Man. 'Tis well.
[*A* Mute *appears, and seeing the* King *retires.*
Ha! stop, and seize that mute; Alonzo, follow him.
Entering he met my eyes, and started back,
Frighted, and fumbling one hand in his bosom,
As to conceal the importance of his errand.
[ALONZO *follows him, and returns with a paper.*
Alon. O bloody proof of obstinate fidelity!
Man. What dost thou mean?
Alon. Soon as I seized the man,
He snatch'd from out his bosom this—and strove
With rash and greedy haste, at once to cram
The morsel down his throat. I catch'd his arm,
And hardly wrench'd his hand to wring it from him;
Which done, he drew his poniard from his side,
And on the instant plunged it in his breast.
Man. Remove the body thence ere Zara see it.
Alon. [*Aside.*] I'll be so bold to borrow his attire;
'Twill quit me of my promise to Gonsalez.

SCENE II.

MANUEL *and* PEREZ.

Per. Whate'er it is, the king's complexion turns. [*Aside.*
Man. How's this? my mortal foe beneath my roof? [*Having read the letter.*
O give me patience, all ye powers! no, rather
Give me new rage, implacable revenge,
And trebled fury.—Ha! who's there?
Per. My lord!
Man. Hence, slave! how darest thou 'bide, to watch and pry
Into how poor a thing a king descends?
How like thyself, when passion treads him down!
Ha! stir not, on thy life! for thou wert fix'd
And planted here to see me gorge this bait,
And lash against the hook.—By Heaven, you're all
Rank traitors! thou art with the rest combined;
Thou knew'st that Osmyn was Alphonso, knew'st
My daughter privately with him conferr'd;
And wert the spy and pander to their meeting.
Per. By all that's holy, I'm amazed—
Man. Thou liest!
Thou art accomplice too with Zara: here
Where she sets down—*Still will I set thee free*— [*Reading.*
That somewhere is repeated—*I have power*
O'er them that are thy guards.—Mark that, thou traitor!
Per. It was your majesty's command, I should
Obey her order—
Man. [*Reading.*] *And still will I set*
Thee free, Alphonso.—Hell! cursed, cursed Alphonso!
False and perfidious Zara! Strumpet daughter!
Away, begone, thou feeble boy, fond love!
All nature, softness, pity and compassion!
This hour I throw ye off, and entertain
Fell hate within my breast, revenge and gall.
By Heaven, I'll meet, and counterwork this treachery!
Hark thee, villain, traitor—answer me, slave!

Per. My service has not merited those titles.
Man. Darest thou reply? take that—thy service? thine? [*Strikes him.*
What's thy whole life, thy soul, thy all, to my
One moment's ease? Hear my command; and look
That thou obey, or horror on thy head.
Drench me thy dagger in Alphonso's heart:
Why dost thou start? Resolve, or—
Per. Sir, I will.
Man. 'Tis well—that when she comes to set him free,
His teeth may grin, and mock at her remorse.
[PEREZ *going.*
Stay thee—I've farther thought—I'll add to this,
And give her eyes yet greater disappointment:
When thou hast ended him, bring me his robe;
And let the cell where she'll expect to see him
Be darken'd so as to amuse the sight.
I'll be conducted thither—mark me well—
There with his turbant, and his robe array'd,
And laid along as he now lies supine,
I shall convict her to her face of falsehood.
When for Alphonso's she shall take my hand,
And breathe her sighs upon my lips for his,
Sudden I'll start, and dash her with her guilt.
But see she comes; I'll shun the encounter; thou,
Follow me, and give heed to my direction.

SCENE III.

ZARA *and* SELIM.

Zara. The mute not yet return'd!—ha, 'twas the king!
The king that parted hence! frowning he went;
His eyes like meteors roll'd, then darted down
Their red and angry beams; as if his sight
Would, like the raging dog-star, scorch the earth,
And kindle ruin in its course. Dost think
He saw me?
Sel. Yes: but then, as if he thought
His eyes had err'd, he hastily recall'd
The imperfect look, and sternly turn'd away.
Zara. Shun me when seen! I fear thou hast undone me.
Thy shallow artifice begets suspicion,
And like a cobweb veil, but thinly shades
The face of thy design; alone disguising
What should have ne'er been seen; imperfect mischief!
Thou, like the adder, venomous and deaf,
Hast stung the traveller; and after hear'st
Not his pursuing voice; even where thou think'st
To hide, the rustling leaves and bended grass
Confess, and point the path which thou hast crept.
O fate of fools! officious in contriving;
In executing puzzled, lame and lost.
Sel. Avert it, Heaven, that you should ever suffer
For my defect! or that the means which I
Devised to serve should ruin your design!
Prescience is Heaven's alone, not given to man.
If I have fail'd in what, as being man,
I needs must fail; impute not as a crime
My nature's want, but punish nature in me:
I plead not for a pardon, and to live,
But to be punish'd and forgiven. Here, strike!
I bare my breast to meet your just revenge.
Zara. I have not leisure now to take so poor
A forfeit as thy life: somewhat of high
And more important fate requires my thought.
When I've concluded on myself, if I
Think fit, I'll leave thee my command to die.
Regard me well; and dare not to reply
To what I give in charge; for I'm resolved.
Give order that the two remaining mutes
Attend me instantly, with each a bowl
Of such ingredients mix'd, as will with speed
Benumb the living faculties, and give
Most easy and inevitable death.
Yes, Osmyn, yes; be Osmyn or Alphonso,
I'll give thee freedom, if thou darest be free:
Such liberty as I embrace myself,
Thou shalt partake. Since fates no more afford,
I can but die with thee to keep my word.

SCENE IV.—*The Prison.*

GONSALEZ *alone, disguised like a* Mute, *with a dagger.*

Nor sentinel, nor guard! the doors unbarr'd!
And all as still as at the noon of night!
Sure death already has been busy here.
There lies my way, that door too is unlock'd.
[*Looks in.*
Ha! sure he sleeps—all's dark within, save what
A lamp, that feebly lifts a sickly flame,
By fits reveals.—His face seems turn'd, to favour
The attempt. I'll steal, and do it unperceived.
What noise! Somebody coming? 'st, Alonzo?
Nobody? Sure he'll wait without—I would
'Twere done—I'll crawl, and sting him to the heart:
Then cast my skin, and leave it there to answer it.
[*Goes in.*

SCENE V.

GARCIA *and* ALONZO.

Gar. Where? where, Alonzo? where's my father? where
The king! Confusion! all is on the rout!
All's lost, all ruin'd by surprise and treachery.
Where, where is he? why dost thou thus mislead me?
Alon. My lord, he enter'd but a moment since,
And could not pass me unperceived—What, ho!
My lord, my lord! what, ho! my lord Gonsalez!

SCENE VI.

GARCIA, ALONZO, GONSALEZ *bloody.*

Gon. Perdition choke your clamours!—whence this rudeness?
Garcia!
Gar. Perdition, slavery and death,
Are entering now our doors. Where is the king?
What means this blood? and why this face of horror?
Gon. No matter—give me first to know the cause
Of these your rash and ill-timed exclamations.
Gar. The eastern gate is to the foe betray'd,
Who, but for heaps of slain that choke the passage,
Had enter'd long ere now, and borne down all
Before 'em, to the palace walls. Unless

The king in person animate our men,
Granada's lost: and to confirm this fear,
The traitor Perez, and the captive Moor,
Are through a postern fled, and join the foe.
Gon. Would all were false as that; for whom you call
The Moor, is dead. That Osmyn was Alphonso;
In whose heart's blood this poniard yet is warm.
Gar. Impossible, for Osmyn was, while flying,
Pronounced aloud by Perez for Alphonso.
Gon. Enter that chamber, and convince your eyes,
How much report has wrong'd your easy faith.
[GARCIA *goes in.*
Alon. My lord, for certain truth, Perez is fled;
And has declared the cause of his revolt,
Was to revenge a blow the king had given him.

Re-enter GARCIA.

Gar. Ruin and horror! O heart-wounding sight!
Gon. What says my son? what ruin? ha, what horror?
Gar. Blasted my eyes, and speechless be my tongue!
Rather than or to see, or to relate
This deed.—O dire mistake! O fatal blow!
The king—
Gon. Alon. The king!
Gar. Dead, weltering, drown'd in blood.
See, see, attired like Osmyn, where he lies!
[*They look in.*
O whence, or how, or wherefore was this done?
But what imports the manner, or the cause?
Nothing remains to do, or to require,
But that we all should turn our swords against
Ourselves, and expiate with our own his blood.
Gon. O wretch! O cursed, and rash, deluded fool!
On me, on me, turn your avenging sword!
I, who have spilt my royal master's blood,
Should make atonement by a death as horrid;
And fall beneath the hand of my own son.
Gar. Ha! what? atone this murder with a greater?
The horror of that thought has damp'd my rage.
The earth already groans to bear this deed;
Oppress her not, nor think to stain her face
With more unnatural blood. Murder my father!
Better with this to rip up my own bowels,
And bathe it to the hilt, in far less damnable
Self-murder.
Gon. O my son! from the blind dotage
Of a father's fondness these ills arose;
For thee I've been ambitious, base, and bloody:
For thee I've plunged into this sea of sin;
Stemming the tide with only one weak hand,
While t'other bore the crown, (to wreath thy brow,)
Whose weight has sunk me ere I reach'd the shore.
Gar. Fatal ambition! Hark! the foe is enter'd. [*Shout.*
The shrillness of that shout speaks 'em at hand.
We have no time to search into the cause
Of this surprising and most fatal error.
What's to be done? the king's death known, will strike
The few remaining soldiers with despair,
And make 'em yield to mercy of the conqueror.
Alon. My lord, I've thought how to conceal the body;
Require me not to tell the means till done,
Lest you forbid what then you may approve.
[*Goes in. Shout.*
Gon. They shout again! Whate'er he means to do,
'Twere fit the soldiers were amused with hopes;
And in the mean time fed with expectation
To see the king in person at their head.
Gar. Were it a truth, I fear 'tis now too late,
But I'll omit no care, nor haste; to try
Or to repel their force, or bravely die.

SCENE VII.

GONSALEZ *and* ALONZO.

Gon. What hast thou done, Alonzo?
Alon. Such a deed
As but an hour ago I'd not have done,
Though for the crown of universal empire.
But what are kings reduced to common clay?
Or who can wound the dead? I've from the body
Sever'd the head, and in an obscure corner
Disposed it, muffled in the mute's attire,
Leaving to view of them that enter next,
Alone the undistinguish'd trunk:
Which may be still mistaken by the guards
For Osmyn, if in seeking for the king
They chance to find it.
Gon. 'Twas an act of horror;
And of a piece with this day's dire misdeeds.
But 'tis no time to ponder or repent.
Haste thee, Alonzo, haste thee hence with speed,
To aid my son. I'll follow with the last
Reserve to re-enforce his arms: at least,
I shall make good, and shelter his retreat.

SCENE VIII.

ZARA, *followed by* SELIM, *and two* Mutes *bearing the bowls.*

Zara. Silence and solitude are everywhere!
Through all the gloomy ways and iron doors
That hither lead, nor human face nor voice
Is seen or heard. A dreadful din was wont
To grate the sense, when enter'd here; from groans
And howls of slaves condemn'd, from clink of chains,
And crash of rusty bars and creeking hinges:
And ever and anon the sight was dash'd
With frightful faces, and the meagre looks
Of grim and ghastly executioners.
Yet more this stillness terrifies my soul,
Than did that scene of complicated horrors.
It may be, that the cause of this my errand
And purpose, being changed from life to death,
Has also wrought this chilling change of temper.
Or does my heart bode more? what can it more
Than death?
Let 'em set down the bowls, and warn Alphonso
That I am here—so. You return and find
[*Mutes go in.*
The king; tell him, what he required I've done,
And wait his coming to approve the deed.

SCENE IX.

ZARA *and* Mutes.

Zara. What have you seen? Ha! wherefore stare you thus
[*The* Mutes *return, and look affrighted.*
With haggard eyes? why are your arms a-cross?
Your heavy and desponding heads hung down?
Why is't you more than speak in these sad signs?
Give me more ample knowledge of this mourning.
[*They go to the Scene, which opening, she perceives the body.*
Ha! prostrate! bloody! headless! O—I'm lost!
O Osmyn! O Alphonso! Cruel fate!
Cruel, cruel, O more than killing object!
I came prepared to die, and see thee die—
Nay, came prepared myself to give thee death—
But cannot bear to find thee thus, my Osmyn—
O this accursed, this base, this treacherous king!

SCENE X.

ZARA, SELIM, *and* Mutes.

Sel. I've sought in vain, for nowhere can the king
Be found.
Zara. Get thee to hell, and seek him there!
[*Stabs him.*
His hellish rage had wanted means to act,
But for thy fatal and pernicious counsel.
Sel. You thought it better then—but I'm rewarded:
The mute you sent by some mischance was seen,
And forced to yield your letter with his life:
I found the dead and bloody body stripp'd—
My tongue falters, and my voice fails—I sink—
Drink not the poison—for Alphonso is— [*Dies.*
Zara. As thou art now—and I shall quickly be.
'Tis not that he is dead; for 'twas decreed
We both should die. Nor is't that I survive;
I have a certain remedy for that.
But oh, he died unknowing in my heart!
He knew I loved, but knew not to what height:
Nor that I meant to fall before his eyes,
A martyr and a victim to my vows:
Insensible of this last proof he's gone.
Yet fate alone can rob his mortal part
Of sense; his soul still sees, and knows each purpose,
And fix'd event of my persisting faith.
Then, wherefore do I pause? give me the bowl.
[*A* Mute *kneels and gives one of the bowls.*
Hover a moment, yet, thou gentle spirit,
Soul of my love, and I will wait thy flight!
This to our mutual bliss when join'd above.
[*Drinks.*
O friendly draught, already in my heart!
Cold, cold! my veins are icicles and frost.
I'll creep into his bosom, lay me there;
Cover us close—or I shall chill his breast,
And fright him from my arms—See, see, he slides
Still further from me! look, he hides his face!
I cannot feel it—quite beyond my reach—
O now he's gone, and all is dark— [*Dies.*
[*The* Mutes *kneel and mourn over her.*

SCENE XI.

ALMERIA, LEONORA, *and* Mutes.

Alm. O let me seek him in this horrid cell;
For in the tomb, or prison, I alone
Must hope to find him.
Leon. Heavens! what dismal scene
Of death is this! The eunuch Selim slain!
Alm. Show me, for I am come in search of death;
But want a guide; for tears have dimm'd my sight.
Leon. Alas, a little farther, and behold
Zara all pale and dead! two frightful men,
Who seem the murderers, kneel weeping by,
Feeling remorse too late for what they've done.
But O forbear—lift up your eyes no more;
But haste away, fly from this fatal place!
Where miseries are multiplied; return,
Return! and look not on; for there's a dagger
Ready to stab the sight, and make your eyes
Rain blood—
Alm. Oh I foreknow, foresee that object.
Is it at last then so? is he then dead?
What, dead at last! quite, quite, for ever dead!
There, there I see him! there he lies, the blood
Yet bubbling from his wounds—O more than savage!
Had they or hearts or eyes, that did this deed!
Could eyes endure to guide such cruel hands?
Are not my eyes guilty alike with theirs,
That thus can gaze, and yet not turn to stone?
I do not weep! The springs of tears are dried;
And of a sudden I am calm, as if
All things were well: and yet my husband's murder'd!
Yes, yes, I know to mourn! I'll sluice this heart,
The source of woe, and let the torrent loose.
Those men have left to weep! they look on me!
I hope they murder all on whom they look.
Behold me well; your bloody hands have err'd,
And wrongfully have slain those innocents;
I am the sacrifice design'd to bleed;
And come prepared to yield my throat—they shake
Their heads, in sign of grief and innocence!
[*The* Mutes *point at the bowl on the ground.*
And point—what mean they? Ha! a cup. O well
I understand what medicine has been here.
O noble thirst! yet greedy to drink all—
Oh for another draught of death.—What mean they?
[*The* Mutes *point at the other cup.*
Ha! point again? 'tis there, and full, I hope.
Thanks to the liberal hand that fill'd thee thus;
I'll drink my glad acknowledgment—
Leon. O hold,
For mercy's sake! upon my knee I beg—
Alm. With thee the kneeling world should beg in vain.
Seest thou not there? behold who prostrate lies,
And pleads against thee? who shall then prevail?
Yet I will take a cold and parting leave,
From his pale lips; I'll kiss him, ere I drink,
Lest the rank juice should blister on my mouth,
And stain the colour of my last adieu.
Horror! a headless trunk! nor lips nor face,
[*Coming nearer the body, starts and lets fall the cup.*
But spouting veins, and mangled flesh! Oh, oh!

SCENE XII.

ALMERIA, LEONORA, ALPHONSO, HELI, PEREZ, *with* GARCIA *prisoner*, Guards *and* Attendants.

Alph. Away, stand off! where is she? let me fly,
Save her from death, and snatch her to my heart.
Alm. Oh!
Alph. Forbear; my arms alone shall hold her up,
Warm her to life, and wake her into gladness.
O let me talk to thy reviving sense,
The words of joy and peace! warm thy cold beauties,
With the new-flushing ardour of my cheek!
Into thy lips pour the soft trickling balm
Of cordial sighs! and re-inspire thy bosom
With the breath of love! Shine, awake, Almeria!
Give a new birth to thy long-shaded eyes,
Then double on the day reflected light!
Alm. Where am I? Heaven! what does this dream intend?
Alph. O mayst thou never dream of less delight,
Nor ever wake to less substantial joys!
Alm. Given me again from death! O all ye powers
Confirm this miracle! Can I believe
My sight, against my sight? and shall I trust
That sense, which in one instant shows him dead
And living? Yes, I will; I've been abused
With apparitions and affrighting phantoms:
This is my lord, my life, my only husband:
I have him now, and we no more will part.
My father too shall have compassion—
Alph. O my heart's comfort! 'tis not given to this
Frail life, to be entirely bless'd. Even now,
In this extremest joy my soul can taste,
Yet am I dash'd to think that thou must weep;
Thy father fell, where he design'd my death.
Gonsalez and Alonzo, both of wounds
Expiring, have with their last breath confess'd
The just decrees of Heaven, which on themselves
Has turn'd their own most bloody purposes.
Nay, I must grant, 'tis fit you should be thus— [ALMERIA *weeps*.
Let 'em remove the body from her sight.
Ill-fated Zara! Ha! a cup? Alas!
Thy error then is plain; but I were flint
Not to o'erflow in tribute to thy memory.
O Garcia!
Whose virtue has renounced thy father's crimes;
Seest thou, how just the hand of Heaven has been?
Let us, who through our innocence survive,
Still in the paths of honour persevere,
And not from past or present ills despair:
For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds;
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds. [*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY MRS. BRACEGIRDLE.

THE tragedy thus done, I am, you know,
No more a princess, but in *statu quo:*
And now as unconcern'd this mourning wear,
As if indeed a widow or an heir.
I've leisure now to mark your several faces,
And know each critic by his sour grimaces.
To poison plays, I see some where they sit,
Scatter'd, like ratsbane, up and down the pit;
While others watch like parish-searchers, hired
To tell of what disease the play expired.
Oh with what joy they run to spread the news
Of a damn'd poet, and departed muse!
But if he 'scape, with what regret they're seized!
And how they're disappointed when they're pleased!
Critics to plays for the same end resort,
That surgeons wait on trials in a court;
For innocence condemn'd they've no respect,
Provided they've a body to dissect.
As Sussex-men, that dwell upon the shore,
Look out when storms arise, and billows roar,
Devoutly praying, with uplifted hands,
That some well-laden ship may strike the sands;
To whose rich cargo they may make pretence,
And fatten on the spoils of Providence:
So critics throng to see a new play split,
And thrive and prosper on the wrecks of wit.
Small hope our poet from these prospects draws;
And therefore to the fair commends his cause.
Your tender hearts to mercy are inclined,
With whom, he hopes, this play will favour find,
Which was an offering to the sex design'd.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

A Comedy.

Audire est operæ pretium, procedere recte
Qui mœchis non vultis.—HORAT. Lib. i. Sat. 2.

Metuat, doti deprensa. Ibid.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

RALPH, EARL OF MONTAGUE, &c.

MY LORD,—Whether the world will arraign me of vanity or not, that I have presumed to dedicate this comedy to your Lordship, I am yet in doubt; though, it may be, it is some degree of vanity even to doubt of it. One who has at any time had the honour of your Lordship's conversation, cannot be supposed to think very meanly of that which he would prefer to your perusal; yet it were to incur the imputation of too much sufficiency, to pretend to such a merit as might abide the test of your Lordship's censure.

Whatever value may be wanting to this play while yet it is mine, will be sufficiently made up to it when it is once become your Lordship's; and it is my security, that I cannot have overrated it more by my dedication, than your Lordship will dignify it by your patronage.

That it succeeded on the stage, was almost beyond my expectation; for but little of it was prepared for that general taste which seems now to be predominant in the palates of our audience.

Those characters which are meant to be ridiculed in most of our comedies, are of fools so gross, that, in my humble opinion, they should rather disturb than divert the well-natured and reflecting part of an audience; they are rather objects of charity than contempt; and instead of moving our mirth, they ought very often to excite our compassion.

This reflection moved me to design some characters which should appear ridiculous, not so much through a natural folly (which is incorrigible, and therefore not proper for the stage) as through an affected wit; a wit, which at the same time that it is affected, is also false. As there is some difficulty in the formation of a character of this nature, so there is some hazard which attends the progress of its success upon the stage; for many come to a play so overcharged with criticism, that they very often let fly their censure, when through their rashness they have mistaken their aim. This I had occasion lately to observe; for this play had been acted two or three days, before some of these hasty judges could find the leisure to distinguish betwixt the character of a Witwoud and a Truewit.

I must beg your Lordship's pardon for this digression from the true course of this epistle; but that it may not seem altogether impertinent, I beg that I may plead the occasion of it, in part of that excuse of which I stand in need, for recommending this comedy to your protection. It is only by the countenance of your Lordship, and the *few* so qualified, that such who write with care and pains can hope to be distinguished; for the prostituted name of *poet* promiscuously levels all that bear it.

Terence, the most correct writer in the world, had a Scipio and a Lælius, if not to assist him, at least to support him in his reputation; and notwithstanding his extraordinary merit, it may be their countenance was not more than necessary.

The purity of his style, the delicacy of his turns, and the justness of his characters, were all of them beauties which the greater part of his audience were incapable of tasting; some of the coarsest strokes of Plautus, so severely censured by Horace, were more likely to affect the multitude; such who come with expectation to laugh at the last act of a play, and are better entertained with two or three unseasonable jests, than with the artful solution of the *fable*.

As Terence excelled in his performances, so had he great advantages to encourage his undertakings; for he built most on the foundations of Menander; his plots were generally modelled, and his characters ready drawn to his hand. He copied Menander, and Menander had no less light in the formation of his characters, from the observations of Theophrastus, of whom he was a disciple; and Theophrastus, it is known, was not only the disciple, but the immediate successor of Aristotle, the first and greatest judge of poetry. These were great models to design by; and the further advantage which Terence possessed, towards giving his plays the due ornaments of purity of style and justness of manners, was not less considerable, from the freedom of conversation which was permitted him with Lælius and Scipio, two of the greatest and most polite men of his age. And indeed the privilege of such a conversation is the only certain means of attaining to the perfection of dialogue.

If it has happened in any part of this comedy, that I have gained a turn of style or expression more correct, or at least more corrigible, than in those which I have formerly written, I must, with equal pride and gratitude, ascribe it to

the honour of your Lordship's admitting me into your conversation, and that of a society where everybody else was so well worthy of you, in your retirement last summer from the town; for it was immediately after that this comedy was written. If I have failed in my performance, it is only to be regretted, where there were so many, not inferior either to a Scipio or a Lælius, that there should be one wanting equal in capacity to a Terence.

If I am not mistaken, poetry is almost the only art which has not yet laid claim to your Lordship's patronage. Architecture and painting, to the great honour of our country, have flourished under your influence and protection. In the mean time, poetry, the eldest sister of all arts, and parent of most, seems to have resigned her birthright, by having neglected to pay her duty to your Lordship, and by permitting others of a later extraction, to prepossess that place in your esteem to which none can pretend a better title. Poetry, in its nature, is sacred to the good and great; the relation between them is reciprocal, and they are ever propitious to it. It is the privilege of poetry to address to them, and it is their prerogative alone to give it protection.

This received maxim is a general apology for all writers who consecrate their labours to great men; but I could wish at this time, that this address were exempted from the common pretence of all dedications; and that as I can distinguish your Lordship even among the most deserving, so this offering might become remarkable by some particular instance of respect, which should assure your Lordship, that I am, with all due sense of your extreme worthiness and humanity, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient, and most obliged humble servant,

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

FAINALL, *in love with* MRS. MARWOOD.
MIRABELL, *in love with* MRS. MILLAMANT.
WITWOUD, } *Followers of* MRS. MILLAMANT.
PETULANT, }
SIR WILFULL WITWOUD, *half Brother to* WITWOUD, *and Nephew to* LADY WISHFORT.
WAITWELL, *Servant to* MIRABELL.

LADY WISHFORT, *Enemy to* MIRABELL, *for having falsely pretended love to her.*
MRS. MILLAMANT, *a fine Lady, Niece to* LADY WISHFORT, *and loves* MIRABELL.
MRS. MARWOOD, *Friend to* MR. FAINALL, *and likes* MIRABELL.
MRS. FAINALL, *Daughter to* LADY WISHFORT, *and Wife to* FAINALL, *formerly Friend to* MIRABELL.
FOIBLE, *Woman to* LADY WISHFORT.
MINCING, *Woman to* MRS. MILLAMANT.
BETTY, *Waiting-maid at a Chocolate-house.*
PEG, *Maid to* LADY WISHFORT.

Coachmen, Dancers, Footmen, *and* Attendants.

SCENE,—LONDON.

The time equal to that of the representation.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. BETTERTON.

Of those few fools who with ill stars are curst,
Sure scribbling fools, call'd poets, fare the worst:
For they're a sort of fools which Fortune makes,
And after she has made 'em fools, forsakes.
With Nature's oafs 'tis quite a different case,
For Fortune favours all her idiot-race.
In her own nest the cuckoo-eggs we find,
O'er which she broods to hatch the changeling-kind.
No portion for her own she has to spare,
So much she dotes on her adopted care.
  Poets are bubbles, by the town drawn in,
Suffer'd at first some trifling stakes to win;
But what unequal hazards do they run!
Each time they write they venture all they've won:
The squire that's butter'd still, is sure to be undone.
This author heretofore has found your favour;
But pleads no merit from his past behaviour.
To build on that might prove a vain presumption,
Should grants, to poets made, admit resumption:
And in Parnassus he must lose his seat,
If that be found a forfeited estate.
  He owns with toil he wrought the following scenes;
But, if they're naught, ne'er spare him for his pains:
Damn him the more; have no commiseration
For dulness on mature deliberation,
He swears he'll not resent one hiss'd-off scene,
Nor, like those peevish wits, his play maintain,
Who, to assert their sense, your taste arraign.
Some plot we think he has, and some new thought;
Some humour too, no farce; but that's a fault.
Satire, he thinks, you ought not to expect;
For so reform'd a town who dares correct?
To please, this time, has been his sole pretence,
He'll not instruct, lest it should give offence.
Should he by chance a knave or fool expose,
That hurts none here, sure here are none of those:
In short, our play shall (with your leave to show it)
Give you one instance of a passive poet,
Who to your judgments yields all resignation;
So save or damn, after your own discretion.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Chocolate-House.*

MIRABELL *and* FAINALL, *rising from cards*, BETTY *waiting.*

Mir. You are a fortunate man, Mr. Fainall!

Fain. Have we done?

Mir. What you please: I'll play on to entertain you.

Fain. No, I'll give you your revenge another time, when you are not so indifferent; you are thinking of something else now, and play too negligently; the coldness of a losing gamester lessens the pleasure of the winner. I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune than I'd make love to a woman who undervalued the loss of her reputation.

Mir. You have a taste extremely delicate, and are for refining on your pleasures.

Fain. Prithee, why so reserved? Something has put you out of humour.

Mir. Not at all: I happen to be grave to-day, and you are gay; that's all.

Fain. Confess, Millamant and you quarrelled last night after I left you; my fair cousin has some humours that would tempt the patience of a Stoic. What, some coxcomb came in, and was well received by her, while you were by?

Mir. Witwoud and Petulant; and what was worse, her aunt, your wife's mother, my evil genius; or to sum up all in her own name, my old Lady Wishfort came in.

Fain. O there it is then! She has a lasting passion for you, and with reason.—What, then my wife was there?

Mir. Yes, and Mrs. Marwood, and three or four more, whom I never saw before. Seeing me, they all put on their grave faces, whispered one another; then complained aloud of the vapours, and after fell into a profound silence.

Fain. They had a mind to be rid of you.

Mir. For which reason I resolved not to stir. At last the good old lady broke through her painful taciturnity with an invective against long visits. I would not have understood her, but Millamant joining in the argument, I rose, and, with a constrained smile, told her, I thought nothing was so easy as to know when a visit began to be troublesome. She reddened, and I withdrew, without expecting her reply.

Fain. You were to blame to resent what she spoke only in compliance with her aunt.

Mir. She is more mistress of herself than to be under the necessity of such a resignation.

Fain. What! though half her fortune depends upon her marrying with my lady's approbation?

Mir. I was then in such a humour, that I should have been better pleased if she had been less discreet.

Fain. Now, I remember, I wonder not they were weary of you; last night was one of their cabal nights; they have 'em three times a-week, and meet by turns at one another's apartments, where they come together like the coroner's inquest, to sit upon the murdered reputations of the week. You and I are excluded; and it was once proposed that all the male sex should be excepted; but somebody moved that, to avoid scandal, there might be one man of the community; upon which motion Witwoud and Petulant were enrolled members.

Mir. And who may have been the foundress of this sect? My lady Wishfort, I warrant, who publishes her detestation of mankind; and full of the vigour of fifty-five, declares for a friend and ratafia; and let posterity shift for itself, she'll breed no more.

Fain. The discovery of your sham addresses to her, to conceal your love to her niece, has provoked this separation; had you dissembled better, things might have continued in the state of nature.

Mir. I did as much as man could, with any reasonable conscience; I proceeded to the very last act of flattery with her, and was guilty of a song in her commendation. Nay, I got a friend to put her into a lampoon, and compliment her with the imputation of an affair with a young fellow, which I carried so far, that I told her the malicious town took notice that she was grown fat of a sudden; and when she lay in of a dropsy, persuaded her she was reported to be in labour. The devil's in't, if an old woman is to be flattered further, unless a man should endeavour downright personally to debauch her; and that my virtue forbade me. But for the discovery of this amour I am indebted to your friend, or your wife's friend, Mrs. Marwood.

Fain. What should provoke her to be your enemy, unless she has made you advances which you have slighted? Women do not easily forgive omissions of that nature.

Mir. She was always civil to me till of late.—I confess I am not one of those coxcombs who are apt to interpret a woman's good manners to her prejudice, and think that she who does not refuse 'em everything, can refuse 'em nothing.

Fain. You are a gallant man, Mirabell; and though you may have cruelty enough not to satisfy a lady's longing, you have too much generosity not to be tender of her honour. Yet you speak with an indifference which seems to be affected, and confesses you are conscious of a negligence.

Mir. You pursue the argument with a distrust that seems to be unaffected, and confesses you are conscious of a concern for which the lady is more indebted to you than is your wife.

Fain. Fy, fy, friend! if you grow censorious I must leave you.—I'll look upon the gamesters in the next room.

Mir. Who are they?

Fain. Petulant and Witwoud.—[*To* BETTY.] Bring me some chocolate. [*Exit.*

Mir. Betty, what says your clock?

Bet. Turned of the last canonical hour, sir. [*Exit.*

Mir. How pertinently the jade answers me!—[*Looking on his watch.*]—Ha! almost one o'clock!—O, y'are come!

SCENE II.

MIRABELL *and* Footman.

Mir. Well, is the grand affair over? You have been something tedious.

Foot. Sir, there's such coupling at Pancras, that they stand behind one another, as 'twere in a country dance. Ours was the last couple to lead up; and no hopes appearing of despatch; besides, the parson growing hoarse, we were afraid his lungs would have failed before it came to our turn; so we drove round to Duke's-place; and there they were rivetted in a trice.

Mir. So, so, you are sure they are married.

Foot. Married and bedded, sir; I am witness.

Mir. Have you the certificate?

Foot. Here it is, sir.

Mir. Has the tailor brought Waitwell's clothes home, and the new liveries?

Foot. Yes, sir.

Mir. That's well. Do you go home again, d'ye hear, and adjourn the consummation till further orders. Bid Waitwell shake his ears, and dame Partlet rustle up her feathers, and meet me at one o'clock by Rosamond's Pond, that I may see her before she returns to her lady; and as you tender your ears be secret.

SCENE III.

MIRABELL, FAINALL, *and* BETTY.

Fain. Joy of your success, Mirabell; you look pleased.

Mir. Ay; I have been engaged in a matter of some sort of mirth, which is not yet ripe for discovery. I am glad this is not a cabal night. I wonder, Fainall, that you who are married, and of consequence should be discreet, will suffer your wife to be of such a party.

Fain. Faith, I am not jealous. Besides, most who are engaged are women and relations; and for the men, they are of a kind too contemptible to give scandal.

Mir. I am of another opinion. The greater the coxcomb, always the more the scandal: for a woman, who is not a fool, can have but one reason for associating with a man who is one.

Fain. Are you jealous as often as you see Witwoud entertained by Millamant?

Mir. Of her understanding I am, if not of her person.

Fain. You do her wrong; for, to give her her due, she has wit.

Mir. She has beauty enough to make any man think so; and complaisance enough not to contradict him who shall tell her so.

Fain. For a passionate lover, methinks you are a man somewhat too discerning in the failings of your mistress.

Mir. And for a discerning man, somewhat too passionate a lover; for I like her with all her faults; nay, like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her; and those affectations which in another woman would be odious, serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall, she once used me with that insolence, that in revenge I took her to pieces; sifted her, and separated her failings; I studied 'em, and got 'em by rote. The catalogue was so large, that I was not without hopes one day or other to hate her heartily: to which end I so used myself to think of 'em, that at length, contrary to my design and expectation, they gave me every hour less and less disturbance; till in a few days it became habitual to me to remember 'em without being displeased. They are now grown as familiar to me as my own frailties; and in all probability, in a little time longer, I shall like 'em as well.

Fain. Marry her, marry her! be half as well acquainted with her charms, as you are with her defects, and my life on't, you are your own man again.

Mir. Say you so?

Fain. Ay, ay, I have experience: I have a wife, and so forth.

SCENE IV.

MIRABELL, FAINALL, BETTY, *and* Messenger.

Mes. Is one squire Witwoud here?

Bet. Yes, what's your business?

Mes. I have a letter for him, from his brother sir Wilfull, which I am charged to deliver into his own hands.

Bet. He's in the next room, friend—that way.

SCENE V.

MIRABELL, FAINALL, *and* BETTY.

Mir. What, is the chief of that noble family in town, sir Wilfull Witwoud?

Fain. He is expected to-day. Do you know him?

Mir. I have seen him. He promises to be an extraordinary person; I think you have the honour to be related to him.

Fain. Yes; he is half brother to this Witwoud by a former wife, who was sister to my lady Wishfort, my wife's mother. If you marry Millamant, you must call cousins too.

Mir. I had rather be his relation than his acquaintance.

Fain. He comes to town in order to equip himself for travel.

Mir. For travel! why, the man that I mean is above forty.

Fain. No matter for that; 'tis for the honour of England, that all Europe should know we have blockheads of all ages.

Mir. I wonder there is not an act of parliament to save the credit of the nation, and prohibit the exportation of fools.

Fain. By no means; 'tis better as 'tis. 'Tis better to trade with a little loss, than to be quite eaten up with being overstocked.

Mir. Pray, are the follies of this knight-errant, and those of the squire his brother, anything related?

Fain. Not at all; Witwoud grows by the knight, like a medlar grafted on a crab. One will melt in your mouth, and t'other set your teeth on edge; one is all pulp, and the other all core.

Mir. So one will be rotten before he be ripe, and the other will be rotten without ever being ripe at all.

Fain. Sir Wilfull is an odd mixture of bashfulness and obstinacy.—But when he's drunk he's as loving as the monster in the Tempest, and much after the same manner. To give t'other his due, he has something of good-nature, and does not always want wit.

Mir. Not always: but as often as his memory fails him, and his common-place of comparisons. He is a fool with a good memory, and some few scraps of other folks' wit. He is one whose conversation can never be approved, yet it is now and then to be endured. He has indeed one good quality, he is not exceptious; for he so passionately affects the reputation of understanding raillery, that he will construe an affront into a jest; and call downright rudeness and ill language, satire and fire.

Fain. If you have a mind to finish his picture, you have an opportunity to do it at full length. Behold the original!

SCENE VI.

MIRABELL, FAINALL, BETTY, *and* WITWOUD.

Wit. Afford me your compassion, my dears! pity me, Fainall! Mirabell, pity me!

Mir. I do from my soul.

Fain. Why, what's the matter?

Wit. No letters for me, Betty?

Bet. Did not a messenger bring you one but now, sir?

Wit. Ay, but no other?

Bet. No, sir.

Wit. That's hard, that's very hard.—A messenger! a mule, a beast of burden! he has brought me a letter from the fool my brother, as heavy as a panegyric in a funeral sermon, or a copy of commendatory verses from one poet to another: and what's worse, 'tis as sure a forerunner of the author, as an epistle dedicatory.

Mir. A fool, and your brother, Witwoud!

Wit. Ay, ay, my half brother. My half brother he is, no nearer upon honour.

Mir. Then 'tis possible he may be but half a fool.

Wit. Good, good, Mirabell, le drole! good, good; hang him, don't let's talk of him.—Fainall, how does your lady? Gad, I say anything in the world to get this fellow out of my head. I beg pardon that I should ask a man of pleasure, and the town, a question at once so foreign and domestic. But I talk like an old maid at a marriage; I don't know what I say: but she's the best woman in the world.

Fain. 'Tis well you don't know what you say, or else your commendation would go near to make me either vain or jealous.

Wit. No man in town lives well with a wife but Fainall.—Your judgment, Mirabell.

Mir. You had better step and ask his wife, if you would be credibly informed.

Wit. Mirabell?

Mir. Ay.

Wit. My dear, I ask ten thousand pardons;—gad, I have forgot what I was going to say to you!

Mir. I thank you heartily, heartily.

Wit. No, but prithee excuse me:—my memory is such a memory.

Mir. Have a care of such apologies, Witwoud; for I never knew a fool but he affected to complain, either of the spleen or his memory.

Fain. What have you done with Petulant?

Wit. He's reckoning his money—my money it was.—I have no luck to-day.

Fain. You may allow him to win of you at play: for you are sure to be too hard for him at repartee; since you monopolise the wit that is between you, the fortune must be his of course.

Mir. I don't find that Petulant confesses the superiority of wit to be your talent, Witwoud.

Wit. Come, come, you are malicious now, and would breed debates.—Petulant's my friend, and a very honest fellow, and a very pretty fellow, and has a smattering—faith and troth, a pretty deal of an odd sort of a small wit: nay, I'll do him justice. I'm his friend, I won't wrong him neither.—And if he had any judgment in the world, he would not be altogether contemptible. Come, come, don't detract from the merits of my friend.

Fain. You don't take your friend to be over-nicely bred?

Wit. No, no, hang him, the rogue has no manners at all, that I must own:—no more breeding than a bum-bailiff, that I grant you:—'tis pity, faith; the fellow has fire and life.

Mir. What, courage?

Wit. Hum, faith I don't know as to that, I can't say as to that—Yes, faith, in a controversy, he'll contradict anybody.

Mir. Though 'twere a man whom he feared, or a woman whom he loved.

Wit. Well, well, he does not always think before he speaks;—we have all our failings: you are too hard upon him, you are, faith. Let me excuse him—I can defend most of his faults, except one or two: one he has, that's the truth on't; if he were my brother, I could not acquit him:—that, indeed, I could wish were otherwise.

Mir. Ay marry, what's that, Witwoud?

Wit. O pardon, me!—expose the infirmities of my friend!—No, my dear, excuse me there.

Fain. What, I warrant he's unsincere, or 'tis some such trifle.

Wit. No, no; what if he be? 'tis no matter for that, his wit will excuse that: a wit should no more be sincere, than a woman constant; one argues a decay of parts, as t'other of beauty.

Mir. Maybe you think him too positive?

Wit. No, no, his being positive is an incentive to argument, and keeps up conversation.

Fain. Too illiterate?

Wit. That! that's his happiness:—his want of learning gives him the more opportunities to show his natural parts.

Mir. He wants words?

Wit. Ay: but I like him for that now; for his want of words gives me the pleasure very often to explain his meaning.

Fain. He's impudent?

Wit. No, that's not it.

Mir. Vain?

Wit. No.

Mir. What! he speaks unseasonable truths sometimes, because he has not wit enough to invent an evasion?

Wit. Truths! ha! ha! ha! no, no; since you will have it,—I mean, he never speaks truth at all,—that's all. He will lie like a chambermaid, or a woman of quality's porter. Now that is a fault.

SCENE VII.

MIRABELL, FAINALL, WITWOUD, BETTY, *and* Coachman.

Coach. Is master Petulant here, mistress?

Bet. Yes.

Coach. Three gentlewomen in a coach would speak with him.

Fain. O brave Petulant! three!

Bet. I'll tell him.

Coach. You must bring two dishes of chocolate and a glass of cinnamon-water.

SCENE VIII.

MIRABELL, FAINALL, *and* WITWOUD.

Wit. That should be for two fasting strumpets, and a bawd troubled with the wind. Now you may know what the three are.

Mir. You are very free with your friend's acquaintance.

Wit. Ay, ay, friendship without freedom is as dull as love without enjoyment, or wine without toasting. But to tell you a secret, these are trulls whom he allows coach-hire, and something more, by the week, to call on him once a-day at public places.

Mir. How!

Wit. You shall see he won't go to 'em, because there's no more company here to take notice of him.—Why this is nothing to what he used to do:—before he found out this way, I have known him call for himself.

Fain. Call for himself! what dost thou mean?

Wit. Mean! why he would slip you out of this chocolate-house, just when you had been talking to him—as soon as your back was turned—whip he was gone!—then trip to his lodging, clap on a hood and scarf, and a mask, slap into a hackney-coach, and drive hither to the door again in a trice, where he would send in for himself; that I mean, call for himself, wait for himself; nay, and what's more, not finding himself, sometimes leave a letter for himself.

Mir. I confess this is something extraordinary.—I believe he waits for himself now, he is so long a-coming: Oh! I ask his pardon.

SCENE IX.

PETULANT, MIRABELL, FAINALL, WITWOUD, *and* BETTY.

Bet. Sir, the coach stays.

Pet. Well, well;—I come.—'Sbud, a man had as good be a professed midwife, as a professed whoremaster, at this rate! to be knocked up and raised at all hours, and in all places. Pox on 'em, I won't come!—D'ye hear, tell 'em I won't come:—let 'em snivel and cry their hearts out.

Fain. You are very cruel, Petulant.

Pet. All's one, let it pass:—I have a humour to be cruel.

Mir. I hope they are not persons of condition that you use at this rate.

Pet. Condition! condition's a dried fig, if I am not in humour!—By this hand, if they were your—a—a—your what d'ye-call-'ems themselves, they must wait or rub off, if I want appetite.

Mir. What d'ye-call-'ems! what are they, Witwoud?

Wit. Empresses, my dear:—by your what-d'ye-call-'ems he means sultana queens.

Pet. Ay, Roxolanas.

Mir. Cry you mercy!

Fain. Witwoud says they are—

Pet. What does he say th'are?

Wit. I? fine ladies, I say.

Pet. Pass on, Witwoud.—Hark'ee, by this light, his relations:—two co-heiresses his cousins, and an old aunt, who loves caterwauling better than a conventicle.

Wit. Ha! ha! ha! I had a mind to see how the rogue would come off.—Ha! ha! ha! gad, I can't be angry with him, if he had said they were my mother and my sisters.

Mir. No!

Wit. No; the rogue's wit and readiness of invention charm me, dear Petulant.

Bet. They are gone, sir, in great anger.

Pet. Enough, let 'em trundle. Anger helps complexion, saves paint.

Fain. This continence is all dissembled; this is in order to have something to brag of the next time he makes court to Millamant, and swear he has abandoned the whole sex for her sake.

Mir. Have you not left off your impudent pretensions there yet? I shall cut your throat some time or other, Petulant, about that business.

Pet. Ay, ay, let that pass—there are other throats to be cut.

Mir. Meaning mine, sir?

Pet. Not I—I mean nobody—I know nothing:—but there are uncles and nephews in the world—and they may be rivals—what then! all's one for that.

Mir. How! hark'ee, Petulant, come hither:—explain, or I shall call your interpreter.

Pet. Explain! I know nothing.—Why, you have an uncle, have you not, lately come to town, and lodges by my lady Wishfort's?

Mir. True.

Pet. Why, that's enough—you and he are not friends; and if he should marry and have a child, you may be disinherited, ha?

Mir. Where hast thou stumbled upon all this truth?

Pet. All's one for that; why then say I know something.

Mir. Come, thou art an honest fellow, Petulant, and shalt make love to my mistress, thou sha't, faith. What hast thou heard of my uncle?

Pet. I? nothing, I. If throats are to be cut, let swords clash! snug's the word, I shrug and am silent.

Mir. Oh, raillery, raillery! Come, I know thou art in the women's secrets.—What, you're a cabalist; I know you stayed at Millamant's last night, after I went. Was there any mention made of my uncle or me? tell me. If thou hadst but good-nature equal to thy wit, Petulant, Tony Witwoud, who is now thy competitor in fame, would show as dim by thee as a dead whiting's eye by a pearl of orient; he would no more be seen by thee, than Mercury is by the sun. Come, I'm sure thou wo't tell me.

Pet. If I do, will you grant me common sense then for the future?

Mir. Faith, I'll do what I can for thee, and I'll pray that Heaven may grant it thee in the meantime.

Pet. Well, hark'ee.

[Mirabell *and* Petulant *talk apart.*

Fain. Petulant and you both will find Mirabell as warm a rival as a lover.

Wit. Pshaw! pshaw! that she laughs at Petulant is plain. And for my part, but that it is almost a fashion to admire her, I should—hark'ee—to tell you a secret, but let it go no further—between friends, I shall never break my heart for her.

Fain. How!

Wit. She's handsome; but she's a sort of an uncertain woman.

Fain. I thought you had died for her.

Wit. Umh—no—

Fain. She has wit.

Wit. 'Tis what she will hardly allow anybody else:—now, demme, I should hate that, if she were as handsome as Cleopatra. Mirabell is not so sure of her as he thinks for.

Fain. Why do you think so?

Wit. We stayed pretty late there last night, and heard something of an uncle to Mirabell, who is lately come to town—and is between him and the best part of his estate. Mirabell and he are at some distance, as my lady Wishfort has been told; and you know she hates Mirabell worse than a quaker hates a parrot, or than a fishmonger hates a hard frost. Whether this uncle has seen Mrs. Millamant or not, I cannot say, but there were items of such a treaty being in embryo; and if it should come to life, poor Mirabell would be in some sort unfortunately fobbed, i'faith.

Fain. 'Tis impossible Millamant should hearken to it.

Wit. Faith, my dear, I can't tell; she's a woman, and a kind of humourist.

Mir. And this is the sum of what you could collect last night?

Pet. The quintessence. Maybe Witwoud knows more, he staid longer:—besides, they never mind him; they say anything before him.

Mir. I thought you had been the greatest favourite.

Pet. Ay, *tête-à-tête*, but not in public, because I make remarks.

Mir. You do?

Pet. Ay, ay; pox, I'm malicious, man! Now he's soft you know; they are not in awe of him—the fellow's well-bred; he's what you call a—what-d'ye-call-'em, a fine gentleman; but he's silly withal.

Mir. I thank you, I know as much as my curiosity requires.—Fainall, are you for the Mall?

Fain. Ay, I'll take a turn before dinner.

Wit. Ay, we'll all walk in the Park; the ladies talked of being there.

Mir. I thought you were obliged to watch for your brother sir Wilfull's arrival.

Wit. No, no; he comes to his aunt's, my lady Wishfort. Pox on him! I shall be troubled with him too; what shall I do with the fool?

Pet. Beg him for his estate, that I may beg you afterwards: and so have but one trouble with you both.

Wit. O rare Petulant! thou art as quick as fire in a frosty morning; thou shalt to the Mall with us, and we'll be very severe.

Pet. Enough, I'm in a humour to be severe.

Mir. Are you? pray then walk by yourselves: let not us be accessary to your putting the ladies out of countenance with your senseless ribaldry, which you roar out aloud as often as they pass by you; and when you have made a handsome woman blush, then you think you have been severe.

Pet. What, what! then let 'em either show their innocence by not understanding what they hear, or else show their discretion by not hearing what they would not be thought to understand.

Mir. But hast not thou then sense enough to know that thou oughtest to be most ashamed thyself, when thou hast put another out of countenance?

Pet. Not I, by this hand!—I always take blushing either for a sign of guilt, or ill-breeding.

Mir. I confess you ought to think so. You are in the right, that you may plead the error of your judgment in defence of your practice.

Where modesty's ill-manners, 'tis but fit
That impudence and malice pass for wit.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*St. James's Park.*

Mrs. Fainall *and* Mrs. Marwood.

Mrs. Fain. Ay, ay, dear Marwood, if we will be happy, we must find the means in ourselves, and among ourselves. Men are ever in extremes; either doating or averse. While they are lovers, if they have fire and sense, their jealousies are insupportable; and when they cease to love, (we ought to think at least) they loathe; they look upon us with horror and distaste; they meet us like the ghosts of what we were, and as such, fly from us.

Mar. True, 'tis an unhappy circumstance of life, that love should ever die before us; and that the man so often should outlive the lover. But say what you will, 'tis better to be left, than never to have been loved. To pass our youth in dull indifference, to refuse the sweets of life because they once must leave us, is as preposterous as to wish to have been born old, because we one day must be old. For my part, my youth may wear and waste, but it shall never rust in my possession.

Mrs. Fain. Then it seems you dissemble an aversion to mankind, only in compliance to my mother's humour?

Mar. Certainly. To be free; I have no taste of those insipid dry discourses, with which our sex of force must entertain themselves, apart from men. We may affect endearments to each other, profess eternal friendships, and seem to doat like lovers; but 'tis not in our natures long to persevere. Love will resume his empire in our breasts; and every

heart, or soon or late, receive and re-admit him as its lawful tyrant.

Mrs. Fain. Bless me, how have I been deceived! why you profess a libertine.

Mar. You see my friendship by my freedom. Come, be as sincere, acknowledge that your sentiments agree with mine.

Mrs. Fain. Never!

Mar. You hate mankind?

Mrs. Fain. Heartily, inveterately.

Mar. Your husband?

Mrs. Fain. Most transcendently; ay, though I say it, meritoriously.

Mar. Give me your hand upon it.

Mrs. Fain. There.

Mar. I join with you; what I have said has been to try you.

Mrs. Fain. Is it possible? dost thou hate those vipers, men?

Mar. I have done hating 'em, and am now come to despise 'em; the next thing I have to do, is eternally to forget 'em.

Mrs. Fain. There spoke the spirit of an Amazon, a Penthesilea!

Mar. And yet I am thinking sometimes to carry my aversion further.

Mrs. Fain. How?

Mar. Faith, by marrying; if I could but find one that loved me very well, and would be throughly sensible of ill usage, I think I should do myself the violence of undergoing the ceremony.

Mrs. Fain. You would not make him a cuckold?

Mar. No; but I'd make him believe I did, and that's as bad.

Mrs. Fain. Why, had not you as good do it?

Mar. Oh! if he should ever discover it, he would then know the worst, and be out of his pain; but I would have him ever to continue upon the rack of fear and jealousy.

Mrs. Fain. Ingenious mischief! would thou wert married to Mirabell.

Mar. Would I were!

Mrs. Fain. You change colour.

Mar. Because I hate him.

Mrs. Fain. So do I; but I can hear him named. But what reason have you to hate him in particular?

Mar. I never loved him; he is, and always was, insufferably proud.

Mrs. Fain. By the reason you give for your aversion, one would think it dissembled; for you have laid a fault to his charge, of which his enemies must acquit him.

Mar. Oh then, it seems, you are one of his favourable enemies! Methinks you look a little pale, and now you flush again.

Mrs. Fain. Do I? I think I am a little sick o' the sudden.

Mar. What ails you?

Mrs. Fain. My husband. Don't you see him? He turned short upon me unawares, and has almost overcome me.

SCENE II.

MRS. FAINALL, MRS. MARWOOD, FAINALL, *and* MIRABELL.

Mar. Ha! ha! ha! he comes opportunely for you.

Mrs. Fain. For you, for he has brought Mirabell with him.

Fain. My dear!

Mrs. Fain. My soul!

Fain. You don't look well to-day, child.

Mrs. Fain. D'ye think so?

Mir. He is the only man that does, madam.

Mrs. Fain. The only man that would tell me so at least; and the only man from whom I could hear it without mortification.

Fain. O my dear, I am satisfied of your tenderness; I know you cannot resent anything from me; especially what is an effect of my concern.

Mrs. Fain. Mr. Mirabell, my mother interrupted you in a pleasant relation last night; I would fain hear it out.

Mir. The persons concerned in that affair have yet a tolerable reputation.—I am afraid Mr. Fainall will be censorious.

Mrs. Fain. He has a humour more prevailing than his curiosity, and will willingly dispense with the hearing of one scandalous story, to avoid giving an occasion to make another by being seen to walk with his wife. This way, Mr. Mirabell, and I dare promise you will oblige us both.

SCENE III.

FAINALL *and* MRS. MARWOOD.

Fain. Excellent creature! Well, sure if I should live to be rid of my wife, I should be a miserable man.

Mar. Ay!

Fain. For having only that one hope, the accomplishment of it, of consequence, must put an end to all my hopes; and what a wretch is he who must survive his hopes! Nothing remains when that day comes, but to sit down and weep like Alexander, when he wanted other worlds to conquer.

Mar. Will you not follow 'em?

Fain. Faith, I think not.

Mar. Pray let us; I have a reason.

Fain. You are not jealous?

Mar. Of whom?

Fain. Of Mirabell.

Mar. If I am, is it inconsistent with my love to you that I am tender of your honour?

Fain. You would intimate then, as if there were a fellow-feeling between my wife and him.

Mar. I think she does not hate him to that degree she would be thought.

Fain. But he, I fear, is too insensible.

Mar. It may be you are deceived.

Fain. It may be so. I do now begin to apprehend it.

Mar. What?

Fain. That I have been deceived, madam, and you are false.

Mar. That I am false! what mean you?

Fain. To let you know I see through all your little arts.—Come, you both love him; and both have equally dissembled your aversion. Your mutual jealousies of one another have made you clash till you have both struck fire. I have seen the warm confession reddening on your cheeks, and sparkling from your eyes.

Mar. You do me wrong.

Fain. I do not. 'Twas for my ease to oversee and wilfully neglect the gross advances made him

by my wife; that by permitting her to be engaged, I might continue unsuspected in my pleasures; and take you oftener to my arms in full security. But could you think, because the nodding husband would not wake, that e'er the watchful lover slept?

Mar. And wherewithal can you reproach me?

Fain. With infidelity, with loving another, with love of Mirabell.

Mar. 'Tis false! I challenge you to show an instance that can confirm your groundless accusation. I hate him.

Fain. And wherefore do you hate him? he is insensible, and your resentment follows his neglect. An instance! the injuries you have done him are a proof: your interposing in his love. What cause had you to make discoveries of his pretended passion? to undeceive the credulous aunt, and be the officious obstacle of his match with Millamant?

Mar. My obligations to my lady urged me; I had professed a friendship to her; and could not see her easy nature so abused by that dissembler.

Fain. What, was it conscience then? Professed a friendship! O the pious friendships of the female sex!

Mar. More tender, more sincere, and more enduring, than all the vain and empty vows of men, whether professing love to us, or mutual faith to one another.

Fain. Ha! ha! ha! you are my wife's friend too.

Mar. Shame and ingratitude! do you reproach me? you, you upbraid me? Have I been false to her, through strict fidelity to you, and sacrificed my friendship to keep my love inviolate? And have you the baseness to charge me with the guilt, unmindful of the merit? To you it should be meritorious, that I have been vicious: and do you reflect that guilt upon me, which should lie buried in your bosom?

Fain. You misinterpret my reproof. I meant but to remind you of the slight account you once could make of strictest ties, when set in competition with your love to me.

Mar. 'Tis false, you urged it with deliberate malice! 'twas spoken in scorn, and I never will forgive it.

Fain. Your guilt, not your resentment, begets your rage. If yet you loved, you could forgive a jealousy: but you are stung to find you are discovered.

Mar. It shall be all discovered. You too shall be discovered; be sure you shall. I can but be exposed.—If I do it myself I shall prevent your baseness.

Fain. Why, what will you do?

Mar. Disclose it to your wife; own what has passed between us.

Fain. Frenzy!

Mar. By all my wrongs I'll do't!—I'll publish to the world the injuries you have done me, both in my fame and fortune! With both I trusted you, you bankrupt in honour, as indigent of wealth.

Fain. Your fame I have preserved: your fortune has been bestowed as the prodigality of your love would have it, in pleasures which we both have shared. Yet, had not you been false, I had ere this repaid it—'tis true—had you permitted Mirabell with Millamant to have stolen their marriage, my lady had been incensed beyond all means of reconcilement: Millamant had forfeited the moiety of her fortune; which then would have descended to my wife;—and wherefore did I marry, but to make lawful prize of a rich widow's wealth, and squander it on love and you?

Mar. Deceit and frivolous pretence!

Fain. Death, am I not married? What's pretence? Am I not imprisoned, fettered? Have I not a wife? nay a wife that was a widow, a young widow, a handsome widow; and would be again a widow, but that I have a heart of proof, and something of a constitution to bustle through the ways of wedlock and this world! Will you yet be reconciled to truth and me?

Mar. Impossible. Truth and you are inconsistent: I hate you, and shall for ever.

Fain. For loving you?

Mar. I loathe the name of love after such usage; and next to the guilt with which you would asperse me, I scorn you most. Farewell!

Fain. Nay, we must not part thus.

Mar. Let me go.

Fain. Come, I'm sorry.

Mar. I care not—let me go—break my hands, do—I'd leave 'em to get loose.

Fain. I would not hurt you for the world. Have I no other hold to keep you here?

Mar. Well, I have deserved it all.

Fain. You know I love you.

Mar. Poor dissembling!—O that—well, it is not yet—

Fain. What? what is it not? what is it not yet? It is not yet too late—

Mar. No, it is not yet too late;—I have that comfort.

Fain. It is, to love another.

Mar. But not to loathe, detest, abhor mankind, myself, and the whole treacherous world.

Fain. Nay, this is extravagance.—Come, I ask your pardon—no tears—I was to blame, I could not love you and be easy in my doubts. Pray forbear—I believe you; I'm convinced I've done you wrong; and any way, every way will make amends. I'll hate my wife yet more, damn her! I'll part with her, rob her of all she's worth, and we'll retire somewhere, anywhere, to another world. I'll marry thee—be pacified.—'Sdeath, they come, hide your face, your tears;—you have a mask, wear it a moment. This way, this way—be persuaded.

SCENE IV.

MIRABELL *and* MRS. FAINALL.

Mrs. Fain. They are here yet.

Mir. They are turning into the other walk.

Mrs. Fain. While I only hated my husband, I could bear to see him; but since I have despised him, he's too offensive.

Mir. O you should hate with prudence.

Mrs. Fain. Yes, for I have loved with indiscretion.

Mir. You should have just so much disgust for your husband, as may be sufficient to make you relish your lover.

Mrs. Fain. You have been the cause that I have loved without bounds, and would you set limits to that aversion of which you have been the occasion? why did you make me marry this man?

Mir. Why do we daily commit disagreeable and dangerous actions? to save that idol, reputation. If the familiarities of our loves had produced that consequence of which you were apprehensive, where could you have fixed a father's name with credit, but on a husband? I knew Fainall to be a man lavish of his morals, an interested and professing friend, a false and a designing lover; yet one whose wit and outward fair behaviour have gained a reputation with the town enough to make that woman stand excused who has suffered herself to be won by his addresses. A better man ought not to have been sacrificed to the occasion; a worse had not answered to the purpose. When you are weary of him, you know your remedy.

Mrs. Fain. I ought to stand in some degree of credit with you, Mirabell.

Mir. In justice to you, I have made you privy to my whole design, and put it in your power to ruin or advance my fortune.

Mrs. Fain. Whom have you instructed to represent your pretended uncle?

Mir. Waitwell, my servant.

Mrs. Fain. He is an humble servant to Foible my mother's woman, and may win her to your interest.

Mir. Care is taken for that—she is won and worn by this time. They were married this morning.

Mrs. Fain. Who?

Mir. Waitwell and Foible. I would not tempt my servant to betray me by trusting him too far. If your mother, in hopes to ruin me, should consent to marry my pretended uncle, he might, like Mosca in the Fox, stand upon terms; so I made him sure beforehand.

Mrs. Fain. So, if my poor mother is caught in a contract, you will discover the imposture betimes; and release her by producing a certificate of her gallant's former marriage?

Mir. Yes, upon condition that she consent to my marriage with her niece, and surrender the moiety of her fortune in her possession.

Mrs. Fain. She talked last night of endeavouring at a match between Millamant and your uncle.

Mir. That was by Foible's direction, and my instruction, that she might seem to carry it more privately.

Mrs. Fain. Well, I have an opinion of your success; for I believe my lady will do anything to get a husband; and when she has this, which you have provided for her, I suppose she will submit to anything to get rid of him.

Mir. Yes, I think the good lady would marry anything that resembled a man, though 'twere no more than what a butler could pinch out of a napkin.

Mrs. Fain. Female frailty! we must all come to it, if we live to be old, and feel the craving of a false appetite when the true is decayed.

Mir. An old woman's appetite is depraved like that of a girl—'tis the green sickness of a second childhood; and, like the faint offer of a latter spring, serves but to usher in the fall, and withers in an affected bloom.

Mrs. Fain. Here's your mistress.

SCENE V.

MIRABELL, MRS. FAINALL, MRS. MILLAMANT, WITWOUD, *and* MINCING.

Mir. Here she comes, i'faith, full sail, with her fan spread and her streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders; ha, no, I cry her mercy!

Mrs. Fain. I see but one poor empty sculler; and he tows her woman after him.

Mir. [*To* MILLAMANT.] You seem to be unattended, madam—you used to have the *beau monde* throng after you; and a flock of gay fine perukes hovering round you.

Wit. Like moths about a candle.—I had like to have lost my comparison for want of breath.

Mil. O I have denied myself airs to-day, I have walked as fast through the crowd.

Wit. As a favourite just disgraced; and with as few followers.

Mil. Dear Mr. Witwoud, truce with your similitudes; for I am as sick of 'em—

Wit. As a physician of a good air.—I cannot help it, madam, though 'tis against myself.

Mil. Yet, again!—Mincing, stand between me and his wit.

Wit. Do, Mrs. Mincing, like a screen before a great fire.—I confess I do blaze to-day, I am too bright.

Mrs. Fain. But, dear Millamant, why were you so long?

Mil. Long! Lord, have I not made violent haste; I have asked every living thing I met for you; I have inquired after you, as after a new fashion.

Wit. Madam, truce with your similitudes.—No, you met her husband, and did not ask him for her.

Mil. By your leave, Witwoud, that were like inquiring after an old fashion, to ask a husband for his wife.

Wit. Hum, a hit! a hit! a palpable hit! I confess it.

Mrs. Fain. You were dressed before I came abroad.

Mil. Ay, that's true.—O but then I had—Mincing, what had I? why was I so long?

Min. O mem, your laship stayed to peruse a packet of letters.

Mil. O ay, letters—I had letters—I am persecuted with letters—I hate letters—Nobody knows how to write letters, and yet one has 'em, one does not know why. They serve one to pin up one's hair.

Wit. Is that the way? Pray, madam, do you pin up your hair with all your letters? I find I must keep copies.

Mil. Only with those in verse, Mr. Witwoud, I never pin up my hair with prose.—I think I tried once, Mincing.

Min. O mem, I shall never forget it.

Mil. Ay, poor Mincing tift and tift all the morning.

Min. Till I had the cramp in my fingers, I'll vow, mem: and all to no purpose. But when your laship pins it up with poetry, it sits so pleasant the next day as anything, and is so pure and so crips.

Wit. Indeed, so crips?

Min. You're such a critic, Mr. Witwoud.

Mil. Mirabell, did you take exceptions last night? O ay, and went away.—Now I think on't,

I'm angry—no, now I think on't I'm pleased—for I believe I gave you some pain.

Mir. Does that please you?

Mil. Infinitely; I love to give pain.

Mir. You would affect a cruelty which is not in your nature; your true vanity is in the power of pleasing.

Mil. Oh I ask you pardon for that—one's cruelty is one's power; and when one parts with one's cruelty, one parts with one's power; and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's old and ugly.

Mir. Ay, ay, suffer your cruelty to ruin the object of your power, to destroy your lover—and then how vain, how lost a thing you'll be! Nay, 'tis true: you are no longer handsome when you've lost your lover; your beauty dies upon the instant; for beauty is the lover's gift; 'tis he bestows your charms—your glass is all a cheat. The ugly and the old, whom the looking-glass mortifies, yet after commendation can be flattered by it, and discover beauties in it; for that reflects our praises, rather than your face.

Mil. O the vanity of these men!—Fainall, d'ye hear him? If they did not commend us, we were not handsome! Now you must know they could not commend one, if one was not handsome. Beauty the lover's gift!—Lord, what is a lover, that it can give? Why, one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases; and then, if one pleases, one makes more.

Wit. Very pretty. Why, you make no more of making of lovers, madam, than of making so many card-matches.

Mil. One no more owes one's beauty to a lover, than one's wit to an echo. They can but reflect what we look and say; vain empty things if we are silent or unseen, and want a being.

Mir. Yet to those two vain empty things you owe two the greatest pleasures of your life.

Mil. How so?

Mir. To your lover you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves praised; and to an echo the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

Wit. But I know a lady that loves talking so incessantly, she won't give an echo fair play; she has that everlasting rotation of tongue, that an echo must wait till she dies, before it can catch her last words.

Mil. O fiction!—Fainall, let us leave these men.

Mir. Draw off Witwoud. [*Aside to* MRS. FAINALL.

Mrs. Fain. Immediately.—I have a word or two for Mr. Witwoud.

SCENE VI.

MRS. MILLAMANT, MIRABELL, *and* MINCING.

Mir. I would beg a little private audience too.—You had the tyranny to deny me last night; though you knew I came to impart a secret to you that concerned my love.

Mil. You saw I was engaged.

Mir. Unkind! You had the leisure to entertain a herd of fools; things who visit you from their excessive idleness; bestowing on your easiness that time which is the incumbrance of their lives. How can you find delight in such society? It is impossible they should admire you, they are not capable: or if they were, it should be to you as a mortification; for sure to please a fool is some degree of folly.

Mil. I please myself:—besides, sometimes to converse with fools is for my health.

Mir. Your health! is there a worse disease than the conversation of fools?

Mil. Yes, the vapours; fools are physic for it, next to assafœtida.

Mir. You are not in a course of fools?

Mil. Mirabell, if you persist in this offensive freedom, you'll displease me.—I think I must resolve, after all, not to have you:—we shan't agree.

Mir. Not in our physic, it may be.

Mil. And yet our distemper, in all likelihood, will be the same; for we shall be sick of one another. I shan't endure to be reprimanded nor instructed; 'tis so dull to act always by advice, and so tedious to be told of one's faults—I can't bear it. Well, I won't have you, Mirabell—I'm resolved—I think—you may go.—Ha! ha! ha! what would you give, that you could help loving me?

Mir. I would give something that you did not know I could not help it.

Mil. Come, don't look grave then. Well, what do you say to me?

Mir. I say that a man may as soon make a friend by his wit, or a fortune by his honesty, as win a woman with plain-dealing and sincerity.

Mil. Sententious Mirabell!—Prithee, don't look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child in an old tapestry hanging.

Mir. You are merry, madam, but I would persuade you for a moment to be serious.

Mil. What, with that face? no, if you keep your countenance, 'tis impossible I should hold mine. Well, after all, there is something very moving in a love-sick face. Ha! ha! ha!—well, I won't laugh, don't be peevish—Heigho! now I'll be melancholy, as melancholy as a watch-light. Well, Mirabell, if ever you will win me woo me now.—Nay, if you are so tedious, fare you well;—I see they are walking away.

Mir. Can you not find in the variety of your disposition one moment—

Mil. To hear you tell me Foible's married, and your plot like to speed;—no.

Mir. But how you came to know it?

Mil. Without the help of the devil, you can't imagine; unless she should tell me herself. Which of the two it may have been I will leave you to consider; and when you have done thinking of that, think of me.

SCENE VII.

MIRABELL.

I have something more.—Gone!—Think of you? to think of a whirlwind, though't were in a whirlwind, were a case of more steady contemplation; a very tranquillity of mind and mansion. A fellow that lives in a windmill, has not a more whimsical dwelling than the heart of a man that is lodged in a woman. There is no point of the compass to

which they cannot turn, and by which they are not turned; and by one as well as another; for motion, not method, is their occupation. To know this, and yet continue to be in love, is to be made wise from the dictates of reason, and yet persevere to play the fool by the force of instinct.—Oh, here come my pair of turtles!—What, billing so sweetly! is not Valentine's day over with you yet?

SCENE VIII.

MIRABELL, WAITWELL, *and* FOIBLE.

Mir. Sirrah, Waitwell, why sure you think you were married for your own recreation, and not for my conveniency.

Wait. Your pardon, sir. With submission, we have indeed been solacing in lawful delights; but still with an eye to business, sir. I have instructed her as well as I could. If she can take your directions as readily as my instructions, sir, your affairs are in a prosperous way.

Mir. Give you joy, Mrs. Foible.

Foib. O las, sir, I'm so ashamed!—I'm afraid my lady has been in a thousand inquietudes for me. But I protest, sir, I made as much haste as I could.

Wait. That she did indeed, sir. It was my fault that she did not make more.

Mir. That I believe.

Foib. But I told my lady as you instructed me, sir, that I had a prospect of seeing sir Rowland your uncle; and that I would put her ladyship's picture in my pocket to show him; which I'll be sure to say has made him so enamoured of her beauty, that he burns with impatience to lie at her ladyship's feet, and worship the original.

Mir. Excellent Foible! matrimony has made you eloquent in love.

Wait. I think she has profited, sir, I think so.

Foib. You have seen madam Millamant, sir?

Mir. Yes.

Foib. I told her, sir, because I did not know that you might find an opportunity; she had so much company last night.

Mir. Your diligence will merit more—in the mean time— [*Gives money*

Foib. O dear sir, your humble servant!

Wait. Spouse.

Mir. Stand off, sir, not a penny!—Go on and prosper, Foible:—the lease shall be made good and the farm stocked, if we succeed.

Foib. I don't question your generosity, sir: and you need not doubt of success. If you have no more commands, sir, I'll be gone; I'm sure my lady is at her toilet, and can't dress till I come.—O dear, I'm sure that [*Looking out*] was Mrs Marwood that went by in a mask! If she has seen me with you I'm sure she'll tell my lady. I'll make haste home and prevent her. Your servant, sir.—B'w'y, Waitwell.

SCENE IX.

MIRABELL *and* WAITWELL.

Wait. Sir Rowland, if you please.—The jade's so pert upon her preferment she forgets herself.

Mir. Come, sir, will you endeavour to forget yourself, and transform into sir Rowland?

Wait. Why, sir, it will be impossible I should remember myself.—Married, knighted, and attended all in one day! 'tis enough to make any man forget himself. The difficulty will be how to recover my acquaintance and familiarity with my former self, and fall from my transformation to a reformation into Waitwell. Nay, I shan't be quite the same Waitwell neither; for now, I remember me, I'm married, and can't be my own man again.

Ay there's my grief; that's the sad change of life
To lose my title, and yet keep my wife.
[*Exeunt*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Lady WISHFORT'S *House.*

Lady WISHFORT *at her toilet,* PEG *waiting.*

Lady Wish. Merciful! no news of Foible yet?

Peg. No, madam.

Lady Wish. I have no more patience.—If I have not fretted myself till I am pale again, there's no veracity in me! Fetch me the red—the red, do you hear, sweetheart?—An arrant ash-colour, as I am a person! Look you how this wench stirs! Why dost thou not fetch me a little red? didst thou not hear me, Mopus?

Peg. The red ratafia does your ladyship mean, or the cherry-brandy?

Lady Wish. Ratafia, fool! no, fool. Not the ratafia, fool—grant me patience!—I mean the Spanish paper, idiot—complexion, darling. Paint, paint, paint, dost thou understand that, changeling, dangling thy hands like bobbins before thee? Why dost thou not stir, puppet? thou wooden thing upon wires!

Peg. Lord, madam, your ladyship is so impatient!—I cannot come at the paint, madam; Mrs Foible has locked it up, and carried the key with her.

Lady Wish. A pox take you both!—fetch me the cherry-brandy then.

SCENE II.

Lady WISHFORT.

I'm as pale and as faint, I look like Mrs. Qualmsick, the curate's wife, that's always breeding.—Wench, come, come, wench, what art thou doing, sipping, tasting?—Save thee, dost thou not know the bottle?

SCENE III.

Lady Wishfort, Peg *with a bottle and china cup.*

Peg. Madam, I was looking for a cup.

Lady Wish. A cup, save thee! and what a cup hast thou brought!—Dost thou take me for a fairy, to drink out of an acorn? Why didst thou not bring thy thimble? Hast thou ne'er a brass thimble clinking in thy pocket with a bit of nutmeg?—I warrant thee. Come, fill, fill!—So—again.—[*Knocking at the door.*]—See who that is.—Set down the bottle first—here, here, under the table.—What, wouldst thou go with the bottle in thy hand, like a tapster? As I am a person, this wench has lived in an inn upon the road, before she came to me, like Maritornes the Asturian in Don Quixote!—No Foible yet?

Peg. No, madam; Mrs. Marwood.

Lady Wish. Oh, Marwood; let her come in.—Come in, good Marwood.

SCENE IV.

Lady Wishfort, Mrs. Marwood, *and* Peg.

Mar. I'm surprised to find your ladyship in dishabille at this time of day.

Lady Wish. Foible's a lost thing; has been abroad since morning, and never heard of since.

Mar. I saw her but now, as I came masked through the park, in conference with Mirabell.

Lady Wish. With Mirabell!—You call my blood into my face, with mentioning that traitor. She durst not have the confidence! I sent her to negotiate an affair, in which, if I'm detected, I'm undone. If that wheedling villain has wrought upon Foible to detect me, I'm ruined. O my dear friend, I'm a wretch of wretches if I'm detected.

Mar. O madam, you cannot suspect Mrs. Foible's integrity!

Lady Wish. Oh, he carries poison in his tongue that would corrupt integrity itself! If she has given him an opportunity, she has as good as put her integrity into his hands. Ah, dear Marwood, what's integrity to an opportunity?—Hark! I hear her!—dear friend, retire into my closet, that I may examine her with more freedom.—You'll pardon me, dear friend; I can make bold with you.—There are books over the chimney.—Quarles and Prynne, and The Short View of the Stage, with Bunyan's works, to entertain you.—[*To* Peg.]—Go, you thing, and send her in.

SCENE V.

Lady Wishfort *and* Foible.

Lady Wish. O Foible, where hast thou been? what hast thou been doing?

Foib. Madam, I have seen the party.

Lady Wish. But what hast thou done?

Foib. Nay, 'tis your ladyship has done, and are to do; I have only promised. But a man so enamoured—so transported!—Well, here it is, all that is left; all that is not kiss'd away.—Well, if worshipping of pictures be a sin——poor sir Rowland, I say.

Lady Wish. The miniature has been counted like;—but hast thou not betrayed me, Foible? hast thou not detected me to that faithless Mirabell?—What hadst thou to do with him in the park? Answer me, has he got nothing out of thee?

Foib. [*Aside.*] So the devil has been beforehand with me. What shall I say?—[*Aloud.*]—Alas, madam, could I help it, if I met that confident thing? was I in fault? If you had heard how he used me, and all upon your ladyship's account, I'm sure you would not suspect my fidelity. Nay, if that had been the worst, I could have borne; but he had a fling at your ladyship too; and then I could not hold; but i'faith I gave him his own.

Lady Wish. Me? what did the filthy fellow say?

Foib. O madam! 'tis a shame to say what he said—with his taunts and his fleers, tossing up his nose. Humph! (says he) what, you are a hatching some plot (says he), you are so early abroad, or catering (says he), ferreting for some disbanded officer, I warrant.—Half-pay is but thin subsistence (says he);—well, what pension does your lady propose? Let me see (says he), what, she must come down pretty deep now, she's superannuated (says he) and—

Lady Wish. Odds my life, I'll have him, I'll have him murdered! I'll have him poisoned! Where does he eat?—I'll marry a drawer to have him poisoned in his wine. I'll send for Robin from Locket's immediately.

Foib. Poison him! poisoning's too good for him. Starve him, madam, starve him; marry sir Rowland, and get him disinherited. Oh you would bless yourself to hear what he said!

Lady Wish. A villain! superannuated!

Foib. Humph (says he), I hear you are laying designs against me too (says he), and Mrs. Millamant is to marry my uncle (he does not suspect a word of your ladyship); but (says he) I'll fit you for that. I warrant you (says he) I'll hamper you for that (says he); you and your old frippery too (says he); I'll handle you—

Lady Wish. Audacious villain! handle me! would he durst!—Frippery! old frippery! was there ever such a foul-mouthed fellow? I'll be married to-morrow, I'll be contracted to-night.

Foib. The sooner the better, madam.

Lady Wish. Will sir Rowland be here, sayest thou? when, Foible?

Foib. Incontinently, madam. No new sheriff's wife expects the return of her husband after knighthood with that impatience in which sir Rowland burns for the dear hour of kissing your ladyship's hand after dinner.

Lady Wish. Frippery! superannuated frippery! I'll frippery the villain; I'll reduce him to frippery and rags! a tatterdemalion! I hope to see him hung with tatters, like a Long-lane pent-house or a gibbet thief. A slander-mouthed railer! I warrant the spendthrift prodigal's in debt as much as the million lottery, or the whole court upon a birthday. I'll spoil his credit with his tailor. Yes, he shall have my niece with her fortune, he shall.

Foib. He! I hope to see him lodge in Ludgate first, and angle into Blackfriars for brass farthings with an old mitten.

Lady Wish. Ay, dear Foible; thank thee for that, dear Foible. He has put me out of all patience. I shall never recompose my features to receive sir Rowland with any economy of face.

This wretch has fretted me that I am absolutely decayed. Look, Foible.

Foib. Your ladyship has frowned a little too rashly, indeed, madam. There are some cracks discernible in the white varnish.

Lady Wish. Let me see the glass.—Cracks, sayest thou?—why, I am errantly flayed—I look like an old peeled wall. Thou must repair me, Foible, before sir Rowland comes, or I shall never keep up to my picture.

Foib. I warrant you, madam, a little art once made your picture like you; and now a little of the same art must make you like your picture. Your picture must sit for you, madam.

Lady Wish. But art thou sure sir Rowland will not fail to come? or will he not fail when he does come? Will he be importunate, Foible, and push? For if he should not be importunate, I shall never break decorums:—I shall die with confusion, if I am forced to advance.—Oh no, I can never advance!—I shall swoon if he should expect advances. No, I hope sir Rowland is better bred than to put a lady to the necessity of breaking her forms. I won't be too coy, neither.—I won't give him despair—but a little disdain is not amiss; a little scorn is alluring.

Foib. A little scorn becomes your ladyship.

Lady Wish. Yes, but tenderness becomes me best—a sort of dyingness—you see that picture has a sort of a—ha, Foible! a swimmingness in the eye—yes, I'll look so—my niece affects it; but she wants features. Is sir Rowland handsome? Let my toilet be removed—I'll dress above. I'll receive sir Rowland here. Is he handsome? Don't answer me. I won't know: I'll be surprised, I'll be taken by surprise.

Foib. By storm, madam, sir Rowland's a brisk man.

Lady Wish. Is he! O then he'll importune, if he's a brisk man. I shall save decorums if sir Rowland importunes. I have a mortal terror at the apprehension of offending against decorums. O, I'm glad he's a brisk man. Let my things be removed, good Foible.

SCENE VI.

MRS. FAINALL *and* FOIBLE.

Mrs. Fain. O Foible, I have been in a fright, lest I should come too late! That devil Marwood saw you in the Park with Mirabell, and I'm afraid will discover it to my lady.

Foib. Discover what, madam!

Mrs. Fain. Nay, nay, put not on that strange face, I am privy to the whole design, and know that Waitwell, to whom thou wert this morning married, is to personate Mirabell's uncle, and as such, winning my lady, to involve her in those difficulties from which Mirabell only must release her, by his making his conditions to have my cousin and her fortune left to her own disposal.

Foib. O dear madam, I beg your pardon. It was not my confidence in your ladyship that was deficient; but I thought the former good correspondence between your ladyship and Mr. Mirabell might have hindered his communicating this secret.

Mrs. Fain. Dear Foible, forget that.

Foib. O dear madam, Mr. Mirabell is such a sweet, winning gentleman—but your ladyship is the pattern of generosity.—Sweet lady, to be so good! Mr. Mirabell cannot choose but be grateful. I find your ladyship has his heart still. Now, madam, I can safely tell your ladyship our success; Mrs. Marwood had told my lady; but I warrant I managed myself; I turned it all for the better. I told my lady that Mr. Mirabell railed at her; I laid horrid things to his charge, I'll vow; and my lady is so incensed that she'll be contracted to sir Rowland to-night, she says; I warrant I worked her up, that he may have her for asking for, as they say of a Welsh maidenhead.

Mrs. Fain. O rare Foible!

Foib. Madam, I beg your ladyship to acquaint Mr. Mirabell of his success. I would be seen as little as possible to speak to him:—besides, I believe madam Marwood watches me.—She has a month's mind; but I know Mr. Mirabell can't abide her.—John!—[*Calls.*] remove my lady's toilet.—Madam, your servant: my lady is so impatient, I fear she'll come for me if I stay.

Mrs. Fain. I'll go with you up the back-stairs, lest I should meet her.

SCENE VII.

MRS. MARWOOD.

Indeed, Mrs. Engine, is it thus with you? are you become a go-between of this importance? yes, I shall watch you. Why this wench is the *passe-partout*, a very master-key to everybody's strong-box. My friend Fainall, have you carried it so swimmingly? I thought there was something in it; but it seems 'tis over with you. Your loathing is not from a want of appetite, then, but from a surfeit. Else you could never be so cool to fall from a principal to be an assistant; to procure for him! a pattern of generosity that, I confess. Well, Mr. Fainall, you have met with your match.—O man, man! woman, woman! the devil's an ass: if I were a painter, I would draw him like an idiot, a driveller with a bib and bells: man should have his head and horns, and woman the rest of him. Poor simple fiend!—*Madam Marwood has a month's mind, but he can't abide her.*—'Twere better for him you had not been his confessor in that affair, without you could have kept his counsel closer. I shall not prove another pattern of generosity: he has not obliged me to that with those excesses of himself; and now I'll have none of him. Here comes the good lady, panting ripe; with a heart full of hope, and a head full of care, like any chemist upon the day of projection.

SCENE VIII.

MRS. MARWOOD *and* LADY WISHFORT.

Lady Wish. O dear, Marwood, what shall I say for this rude forgetfulness?—but my dear friend is all goodness.

Mar. No apologies, dear madam, I have been very well entertained.

Lady Wish. As I'm a person, I am in a very chaos to think I should so forget myself:—but

I have such an olio of affairs, really I know not what to do.—Foible!—[*Calls.*] I expect my nephew, sir Wilfull, every moment too.—Why, Foible!—He means to travel for improvement.

Mar. Methinks sir Wilfull should rather think of marrying than travelling at his years. I hear he is turned of forty.

Lady Wish. O he's in less danger of being spoiled by his travels—I am against my nephew's marrying too young. It will be time enough when he comes back, and has acquired discretion to choose for himself.

Mar. Methinks Mrs. Millamant and he would make a very fit match. He may travel afterwards. 'Tis a thing very usual with young gentlemen.

Lady Wish. I promise you I have thought on't —and since 'tis your judgment, I'll think on't again. I assure you I will; I value your judgment extremely. On my word, I'll propose it.

SCENE IX.

MRS. MARWOOD, LADY WISHFORT, *and* FOIBLE.

Lady Wish. Come, come, Foible—I had forgot my nephew will be here before dinner:—I must make haste.

Foib. Mr. Witwoud and Mr. Petulant are come to dine with your ladyship.

Lady Wish. O dear, I can't appear till I'm dressed.—Dear Marwood, shall I be free with you again, and beg you to entertain 'em? I'll make all imaginable haste. Dear friend, excuse me.

SCENE X.

MRS. MARWOOD, MRS. MILLAMANT, *and* MINCING.

Mil. Sure never anything was so unbred as that odious man!—Marwood, your servant.

Mar. You have a colour; what's the matter?

Mil. That horrid fellow, Petulant, has provoked me into a flame:—I have broken my fan.—Mincing, lend me yours; is not all the powder out of my hair?

Mar. No. What has he done?

Mil. Nay, he has done nothing; he has only talked—nay, he has said nothing neither; but he has contradicted everything that has been said. For my part, I thought Witwoud and he would have quarrelled.

Min. I vow, mem, I thought once they would have fit.

Mil. Well, 'tis a lamentable thing, I swear, that one has not the liberty of choosing one's acquaintance as one does one's clothes.

Mar. If we had that liberty, we should be as weary of one set of acquaintance, though never so good, as we are of one suit though never so fine. A fool and a doily stuff would now and then find days of grace, and be worn for variety.

Mil. I could consent to wear 'em, if they would wear alike; but fools never wear out—they are such *drap de Berri* things! without one could give 'em to one's chambermaid after a day or two.

Mar. 'Twere better so indeed. Or what think you of the playhouse? A fine gay glossy fool should be given there, like a new masking habit, after the masquerade is over, and we have done with the disguise. For a fool's visit is always a disguise; and never admitted by a woman of wit, but to blind her affair with a lover of sense. If you would but appear barefaced now, and own Mirabell, you might as easily put off Petulant and Witwoud as your hood and scarf. And indeed, 'tis time, for the town has found it; the secret is grown too big for the pretence. 'Tis like Mrs. Primly's great belly; she may lace it down before, but it burnishes on her hips. Indeed, Millamant, you can no more conceal it, than my lady Strammel can her face; that goodly face, which in defiance of her Rhenish wine tea, will not be comprehended in a mask.

Mil. I'll take my death, Marwood, you are more censorious than a decayed beauty, or a discarded toast.—Mincing, tell the men they may come up. —My aunt is not dressing here; their folly is less provoking than your malice.

SCENE XI.

MILLAMANT *and* MRS. MARWOOD.

Mil. The town has found it! what has it found? That Mirabell loves me is no more a secret, than it is a secret that you discovered it to my aunt, or than the reason why you discovered it is a secret.

Mar. You are nettled.

Mil. You're mistaken. Ridiculous!

Mar. Indeed, my dear, you'll tear another fan, if you don't mitigate those violent airs.

Mil. O silly! ha! ha! ha! I could laugh immoderately. Poor Mirabell! his constancy to me has quite destroyed his complaisance for all the world beside. I swear, I never enjoined it him to be so coy—If I had the vanity to think he would obey me, I would command him to show more gallantry—'tis hardly well-bred to be so particular on one hand, and so insensible on the other. But I despair to prevail, and so let him follow his own way. Ha! ha! ha! pardon me, dear creature, I must laugh, ha! ha! ha! though I grant you 'tis a little barbarous, ha! ha! ha!

Mar. What pity 'tis so much fine raillery, and delivered with so significant gesture, should be so unhappily directed to miscarry!

Mil. Ha! dear creature, I ask your pardon—I swear I did not mind you.

Mar. Mr. Mirabell and you both may think it a thing impossible, when I shall tell him by telling you—

Mil. O dear, what? for it is the same thing if I hear it—ha! ha! ha!

Mar. That I detest him, hate him, madam.

Mil. O madam, why so do I—and yet the creature loves me, ha! ha! ha! how can one forbear laughing to think of it.—I am a sibyl if I am not amazed to think what he can see in me. I'll take my death, I think you are handsomer—and within a year or two as young—if you could but stay for me, I should overtake you—but that cannot be.—Well, that thought makes me melancholic.—Now, I'll be sad.

Mar. Your merry note may be changed sooner than you think.

Mil. D'ye say so? Then I'm resolved I'll have a song to keep up my spirits.

SCENE XII.

MILLAMANT, MRS. MARWOOD, *and* MINCING.

Min. The gentlemen stay but to comb, madam, and will wait on you.

Mil. Desire Mrs.— that is in the next room to sing the song I would have learned yesterday.—You shall hear it, madam—not that there's any great matter in it—but 'tis agreeable to my humour.

SONG.

Love's but the frailty of the mind,
When 'tis not with ambition join'd;
A sickly flame, which, if not fed, expires,
And feeding, wastes in self-consuming fires.

'Tis not to wound a wanton boy
Or amorous youth, that gives the joy;
But 'tis the glory to have pierced a swain,
For whom inferior beauties sigh'd in vain.

Then I alone the conquest prize,
When I insult a rival's eyes:
If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
That heart, which others bleed for, bleed for me.

SCENE XIII.

MILLAMANT, MRS. MARWOOD, MINCING, PETULANT, *and* WITWOUD.

Mil. Is your animosity composed, gentlemen?

Wit. Raillery, raillery, madam; we have no animosity—we hit off a little wit now and then, but no animosity.—The falling-out of wits is like the falling-out of lovers:—we agree in the main, like treble and bass.—Ha, Petulant!

Pet. Ay, in the main—but when I have a humour to contradict—

Wit. Ay, when he has a humour to contradict, then I contradict too. What, I know my cue. Then we contradict one another like two battledores; for contradictions beget one another like Jews.

Pet. If he says black's black—if I have a humour to say 'tis blue—let that pass—all's one for that. If I have a humour to prove it, it must be granted.

Wit. Not positively must—but it may—it may.

Pet. Yes, it positively must, upon proof positive.

Wit. Ay, upon proof positive it must; but upon proof presumptive it only may.—That's a logical distinction now, madam.

Mar. I perceive your debates are of importance, and very learnedly handled.

Pet. Importance is one thing, and learning's another; but a debate's a debate, that I assert.

Wit. Petulant's an enemy to learning; he relies altogether on his parts.

Pet. No, I'm no enemy to learning; it hurts not me.

Mar. That's a sign indeed it's no enemy to you.

Pet. No, no, it's no enemy to anybody but them that have it.

Mil. Well, an illiterate man's my aversion: I wonder at the impudence of any illiterate man to offer to make love.

Wit. That I confess I wonder at too.

Mil. Ah! to marry an ignorant that can hardly read or write!

Pet. Why should a man be any further from being married, though he can't read, than he is from being hanged? The ordinary's paid for setting the psalm, and the parish-priest for reading the ceremony. And for the rest which is to follow in both cases, a man may do it without book—so all's one for that.

Mil. D'ye hear the creature?—Lord, here's company, I'll be gone.

SCENE XIV.

SIR WILFULL WITWOUD *in a riding dress*, MRS. MARWOOD, PETULANT, WITWOUD, *and* Footman.

Wit. In the name of Bartlemew and his fair, what have we here?

Mar. 'Tis your brother, I fancy. Don't you know him?

Wit. Not I.—Yes, I think it is he—I've almost forgot him; I have not seen him since the Revolution.

Foot. [*To* SIR WILFULL.] Sir, my lady's dressing. Here's company; if you please to walk in, in the mean time.

Sir Wil. Dressing! what, it's but morning here, I warrant, with you in London; we should count it towards afternoon in our parts, down in Shropshire.—Why then, belike, my aunt han't dined yet, ha, friend?

Foot. Your aunt, sir?

Sir Wil. My aunt, sir! yes, my aunt, sir, and your lady, sir; your lady is my aunt, sir.—Why, what dost thou not know me, friend? why then send somebody hither that does. How long hast thou lived with thy lady, fellow, ha?

Foot. A week, sir; longer than anybody in the house, except my lady's woman.

Sir Wil. Why then belike thou dost not know thy lady, if thou seest her, ha, friend?

Foot. Why truly, sir, I cannot safely swear to her face in a morning, before she is dressed. 'Tis like I may give a shrewd guess at her by this time.

Sir Wil. Well, prithee try what thou canst do; if thou canst not guess, inquire her out, dost hear, fellow? and tell her, her nephew, sir Wilfull Witwoud, is in the house.

Foot. I shall, sir.

Sir Wil. Hold ye, hear me, friend; a word with you in your ear; prithee who are these gallants?

Foot. Really, sir, I can't tell; here come so many here, 'tis hard to know 'em all.

SCENE XV.

SIR WILFULL WITWOUD, PETULANT, WITWOUD, *and* MRS. MARWOOD.

Sir Wil. Oons, this fellow knows less than a starling; I don't think a' knows his own name.

Mar. Mr. Witwoud, your brother is not behindhand in forgetfulness—I fancy he has forgot you too.

Wit. I hope so—the devil take him that remembers first, I say.

Sir Wil. Save you, gentlemen and lady!

Mar. For shame, Mr. Witwoud; why won't you speak to him?—And you, sir.

Jones

Wit. Petulant, speak.

Pet. And you, sir.

Sir Wil. No offence, I hope. [*Salutes* MRS. MARWOOD.

Mar. No sure, sir.

Wit. This is a vile dog, I see that already. No offence! ha! ha! ha! To him; to him, Petulant, smoke him.

Pet. It seems as if you had come a journey, sir; hem, hem. [*Surveying him round.*

Sir Wil. Very likely, sir, that it may seem so.

Pet. No offence, I hope, sir.

Wit. Smoke the boots, the boots; Petulant, the boots: ha! ha! ha!

Sir Wil. May be not, sir; thereafter, as 'tis meant, sir.

Pet. Sir, I presume upon the information of your boots.

Sir Wil. Why, 'tis like you may, sir: if you are not satisfied with the information of my boots, sir, if you will step to the stable, you may inquire further of my horse, sir.

Pet. Your horse, sir! your horse is an ass, sir!

Sir Wil. Do you speak by way of offence, sir?

Mar. The gentleman's merry, that's all, sir.—[*Aside.*] S'life, we shall have a quarrel betwixt an horse and an ass before they find one another out.—[*Aloud.*] You must not take anything amiss from your friends, sir. You are among your friends here, though it may be you don't know it.—If I am not mistaken, you are sir Wilfull Witwoud.

Sir Wil. Right, lady; I am sir Wilfull Witwoud, so I write myself; no offence to anybody, I hope; and nephew to the lady Wishfort of this mansion.

Mar. Don't you know this gentleman, sir?

Sir Wil. Hum! what, sure 'tis not—yea by'r Lady, but 'tis—s'heart, I know not whether 'tis or no—yea, but 'tis, by the Wrekin. Brother Anthony! what Tony, i'faith! what, dost thou not know me? By'r Lady, nor I thee, thou art so becravated, and so beperiwigged. — S'heart, why dost not speak? art thou overjoyed?

Wit. Odso, brother, is it you? your servant, brother.

Sir Wil. Your servant! why yours, sir. Your servant again—s'heart, and your friend and servant to that—and a—and a—flap-dragon for your service, sir! and a hare's foot and a hare's scut for your service, sir! an you be so cold and so courtly.

Wit. No offence, I hope, brother.

Sir Wil. S'heart, sir, but there is, and much offence!—A pox, is this your inns' o' court breeding, not to know your friends and your relations, your elders and your betters?

Wit. Why, brother Wilfull of Salop, you may be as short as a Shrewsbury-cake, if you please. But I tell you 'tis not modish to know relations in town: you think you're in the country, where great lubberly brothers slabber and kiss one another when they meet, like a call of serjeants—'tis not the fashion here; 'tis not indeed, dear brother.

Sir Wil. The fashion's a fool; and you're a fop, dear brother. S'heart, I've suspected this—by'r Lady, I conjectured you were a fop, since you began to change the style of your letters, and write on a scrap of paper gilt round the edges, no bigger than a *subpœna.* I might expect this when you left off, "Honoured brother;" and "hoping you are in good health," and so forth—to begin with a "Rat me, knight, I'm so sick of a last night's debauch"—'ods heart, and then tell a familiar tale of a cock and a bull, and a whore and a bottle, and so conclude.—You could write news before you were out of your time, when you lived with honest Pimple Nose the attorney of Furnival's Inn—you could entreat to be remembered then to your friends round the Wrekin. We could have gazettes, then, and Dawks's Letter, and the Weekly Bill, till of late days.

Pet. S'life, Witwoud, were you ever an attorney's clerk? of the family of the Furnivals? Ha! ha! ha!

Wit. Ay, ay, but that was but for a while: not long, not long. Pshaw! I was not in my own power then;—an orphan, and this fellow was my guardian; ay, ay, I was glad to consent to that, man, to come to London: he had the disposal of me then. If I had not agreed to that, I might have been bound 'prentice to a felt-maker in Shrewsbury; this fellow would have bound me to a maker of felts.

Sir Wil. S'heart, and better than to be bound to a maker of fops; where, I suppose, you have served your time; and now you may set up for yourself.

Mar. You intend to travel, sir, as I'm informed.

Sir Wil. Belike I may, madam. I may chance to sail upon the salt seas, if my mind hold.

Pet. And the wind serve.

Sir Wil. Serve or not serve, I shan't ask licence of you, sir; nor the weathercock your companion: I direct my discourse to the lady, sir.—'Tis like my aunt may have told you, madam—yes, I have settled my concerns, I may say now, and am minded to see foreign parts. If an how that the peace holds, whereby that is, taxes abate.

Mar. I thought you had designed for France at all adventures.

Sir Wil. I can't tell that; 'tis like I may, and 'tis like I may not. I am somewhat dainty in making a resolution—because when I make it I keep it. I don't stand shill I, shall I, then; if I say't, I'll do't; but I have thoughts to tarry a small matter in town, to learn somewhat of your lingo first, before I cross the seas. I'd gladly have a spice of your French as they say, whereby to hold discourse in foreign countries.

Mar. Here's an academy in town for that use.

Sir Wil. There is? 'Tis like there may.

Mar. No doubt you will return very much improved.

Wit. Yes, refined, like a Dutch skipper from a whale-fishing.

SCENE XVI.

SIR WILFULL WITWOUD, PETULANT, WITWOUD, MRS. MARWOOD, LADY WISHFORT, *and* FAINALL.

Lady Wish. Nephew, you are welcome.

Sir Wil. Aunt, your servant.

Fain. Sir Wilfull, your most faithful servant.

Sir Wil. Cousin Fainall, give me your hand.

Lady Wish. Cousin Witwoud, your servant; Mr. Petulant, your servant—nephew, you are welcome again. Will you drink anything after your journey, nephew; before you eat? dinner's almost ready.

Sir Wil. I'm very well, I thank you, aunt—however, I thank you for your courteous offer. S'heart, I was afraid you would have been in the fashion too, and have remembered to have forgot

your relations. Here's your cousin Tony, belike, I mayn't call him brother for fear of offence.

Lady Wish. O, he's a railleur, nephew—my cousin's a wit: and your great wits always rally their best friends to choose. When you have been abroad, nephew, you'll understand raillery better.

[Fainall *and* Mrs. Marwood *talk apart.*

Sir Wil. Why then let him hold his tongue in the mean time; and rail when that day comes.

SCENE XVII.

Sir Wilfull Witwoud, Petulant, Witwoud, Lady Wishfort, Mrs. Marwood, Fainall, *and* Mincing.

Min. Mem, I am come to acquaint your laship that dinner is impatient.

Sir Wil. Impatient! why then belike it won't stay till I pull off my boots.—Sweetheart, can you help me to a pair of slippers?—My man's with his horses, I warrant.

Lady Wish. Fy, fy, nephew! you would not pull off your boots here?—Go down into the hall—dinner shall stay for you.—My nephew's a little unbred, you'll pardon him, madam.—Gentlemen, will you walk?—Marwood—

Mar. I'll follow you, madam—before sir Wilfull is ready.

SCENE XVIII.

Mrs. Marwood *and* Fainall.

Fain. Why then, Foible's a bawd, an arrant, rank, match-making bawd: and I, it seems, am a husband, a rank husband; and my wife a very arrant, rank wife—all in the way of the world. 'Sdeath, to be a cuckold by anticipation, a cuckold in embryo! sure I was born with budding antlers, like a young satyr, or a citizen's child. 'Sdeath! to be out-witted, to be out-jilted—out-matrimony'd!—If I had kept my speed like a stag, 'twere somewhat,—but to crawl after, with my horns, like a snail, and be outstripped by my wife—'tis scurvy wedlock.

Mar. Then shake it off; you have often wished for an opportunity to part—and now you have it. But first prevent their plot—the half of Millamant's fortune is too considerable to be parted with, to a foe, to Mirabell.

Fain. Damn him! that had been mine—had you not made that fond discovery—that had been forfeited, had they been married. My wife had added lustre to my horns by that increase of fortune; I could have worn 'em tipped with gold, though my forehead had been furnished like a deputy-lieutenant's hall.

Mar. They may prove a cap of maintenance to you still, if you can away with your wife. And she's no worse than when you had her—I dare swear she had given up her game before she was married.

Fain. Hum! that may be.

Mar. You married her to keep you; and if you can contrive to have her keep you better than you expected, why should you not keep her longer than you intended?

Fain. The means, the means.

Mar. Discover to my lady your wife's conduct; threaten to part with her;—my lady loves her, and will come to any composition to save her reputation. Take the opportunity of breaking it, just upon the discovery of this imposture. My lady will be enraged beyond bounds, and sacrifice niece, and fortune, and all, at that conjuncture. And let me alone to keep her warm; if she should flag in her part, I will not fail to prompt her.

Fain. Faith, this has an appearance.

Mar. I'm sorry I hinted to my lady to endeavour a match between Millamant and sir Wilfull: that may be an obstacle.

Fain. Oh, for that matter, leave me to manage him: I'll disable him for that; he will drink like a Dane; after dinner, I'll set his hand in.

Mar. Well, how do you stand affected towards your lady?

Fain. Why, faith, I'm thinking of it.—Let me see—I am married already, so that's over:—my wife has played the jade with me—well, that's over too:—I never loved her, or if I had, why that would have been over too by this time:—jealous of her I cannot be, for I am certain; so there's an end of jealousy:—weary of her I am, and shall be—no, there's no end of that—no, no, that were too much to hope. Thus far concerning my repose; now for my reputation. As to my own, I married not for it, so that's out of the question;—and as to my part in my wife's—why, she had parted with her's before; so bringing none to me, she can take none from me; 'tis against all rule of play, that I should lose to one who has not wherewithal to stake.

Mar. Besides, you forget, marriage is honourable.

Fain. Hum, faith, and that's well thought on; marriage is honourable as you say; and if so, wherefore should cuckoldom be a discredit, being derived from so honourable a root?

Mar. Nay, I know not; if the root be honourable, why not the branches?

Fain. So, so, why this point's clear—well, how do we proceed?

Mar. I will contrive a letter which shall be delivered to my lady at the time when that rascal who is to act sir Rowland is with her. It shall come as from an unknown hand—for the less I appear to know of the truth, the better I can play the incendiary. Besides, I would not have Foible provoked if I could help it—because you know she knows some passages—nay, I expect all will come out—but let the mine be sprung first, and then I care not if I am discovered.

Fain. If the worst come to the worst—I'll turn my wife to grass—I have already a deed of settlement of the best part of her estate; which I wheedled out of her; and that you shall partake at least.

Mar. I hope you are convinced that I hate Mirabell now; you'll be no more jealous?

Fain. Jealous! no—by this kiss—let husbands be jealous; but let the lover still believe; or if he doubt, let it be only to endear his pleasure, and prepare the joy that follows, when he proves his mistress true. But let husbands' doubts convert to endless jealousy; or if they have belief, let it corrupt to superstition and blind credulity. I am single, and will herd no more with 'em. True, I wear the badge, but I'll disown the order. And since I take my leave of 'em, I care not if I leave 'em a common motto to their common crest:—

All husbands must or pain or shame endure;
The wise too jealous are, fools too secure.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Lady WISHFORT'S *House.*

Lady WISHFORT *and* FOIBLE.

Lady Wish. Is sir Rowland coming, sayest thou, Foible? and are things in order?

Foib. Yes, madam. I have put wax lights in the sconces, and placed the footmen in a row in the hall, in their best liveries, with the coachman and postilion to fill up the equipage.

Lady Wish. Have you pulvilled the coachman and postilion, that they may not stink of the stable when sir Rowland comes by?

Foib. Yes, madam.

Lady Wish. And are the dancers and the music ready, that he may be entertained in all points with correspondence to his passion?

Foib. All is ready, madam.

Lady Wish. And—well—and how do I look, Foible?

Foib. Most killing well, madam.

Lady Wish. Well, and how shall I receive him? in what figure shall I give his heart the first impression? there is a great deal in the first impression. Shall I sit?—no, I won't sit—I'll walk—ay, I'll walk from the door upon his entrance; and then turn full upon him—no, that will be too sudden. I'll lie—ay, I'll lie down—I'll receive him in my little dressing-room, there's a couch—yes, yes, I'll give the first impression on a couch.—I won't lie neither, but loll and lean upon one elbow: with one foot a little dangling off, jogging in a thoughtful way—yes—and then as soon as he appears, start, ay, start and be surprised, and rise to meet him in a pretty disorder—yes—O, nothing is more alluring than a levee from a couch, in some confusion:—it shows the foot to advantage, and furnishes with blushes, and recomposing airs beyond comparison. Hark! there's a coach.

Foib. 'Tis he, madam.

Lady Wish. O dear!—Has my nephew made his addresses to Millamant? I ordered him.

Foib. Sir Wilfull is set in to drinking, madam, in the parlour.

Lady Wish. Odds my life, I'll send him to her. Call her down, Foible; bring her hither. I'll send him as I go—when they are together, then come to me, Foible, that I may not be too long alone with sir Rowland.

SCENE II.

MRS. MILLAMANT, MRS. FAINALL, *and* FOIBLE.

Foib. Madam, I stayed here, to tell your ladyship that Mr. Mirabell has waited this half hour for an opportunity to talk with you: though my lady's orders were to leave you and sir Wilfull together. Shall I tell Mr. Mirabell that you are at leisure?

Mil. No,—what would the dear man have? I am thoughtful, and would amuse myself—bid him come another time.

There never yet was woman made,
Nor shall but to be cursed.
[*Repeating, and walking about.*

That's hard!

Mrs. Fain. You are very fond of sir John Suckling to-day, Millamant, and the poets.

Mil. He? Ay, and filthy verses—so I am.

Foib. Sir Wilfull is coming, madam. Shall I send Mr. Mirabell away?

Mil. Ay, if you please, Foible, send him away—or send him hither—just as you will, dear Foible.—I think I'll see him—shall I? ay, let the wretch come.

Thyrsis, a youth of the inspirèd train.
[*Repeating.*

Dear Fainall, entertain sir Wilfull—thou hast philosophy to undergo a fool, thou art married and hast patience—I would confer with my own thoughts.

Mrs. Fain. I am obliged to you, that you would make me your proxy in this affair; but I have business of my own.

SCENE III.

MILLAMANT, MRS. FAINALL, *and* SIR WILFULL.

Mrs. Fain. O sir Wilfull, you are come at the critical instant. There's your mistress up to the ears in love and contemplation; pursue your point now or never.

Sir Wil. Yes; my aunt will have it so—I would gladly have been encouraged with a bottle or two, because I'm somewhat wary at first before I am acquainted.—[*This while* MILLAMANT *walks about repeating to herself.*]—But I hope, after a time, I shall break my mind—that is, upon further acquaintance—so for the present, cousin, I'll take my leave—if so be you'll be so kind to make my excuse, I'll return to my company—

Mrs. Fain. O fy, sir Wilfull! what, you must not be daunted.

Sir Wil. Daunted! no, that's not it, it is not so much for that—for if so be that I set on't, I'll do't. But only for the present, 'tis sufficient till further acquaintance, that's all—your servant.

Mrs. Fain. Nay, I'll swear you shall never lose so favourable an opportunity, if I can help it. I'll leave you together, and lock the door.

SCENE IV.

SIR WILFULL *and* MILLAMANT.

Sir Wil. Nay, nay, cousin—I have forgot my gloves—what d'ye do?—S'heart, a'has locked the door indeed, I think—nay, cousin Fainall, open the door—pshaw, what a vixen trick is this?—Nay, now a'has seen me too.—Cousin, I made bold to

pass through as it were—I think this door's enchanted!

Mil. [*Repeating.*]

I prithee spare me, gentle boy,
Press me no more for that slight toy.

Sir Wil. Anan? Cousin, your servant.

Mil. [*Repeating.*]

That foolish trifle of a heart.

Sir Wilfull!

Sir Wil. Yes—your servant. No offence, I hope, cousin.

Mil. [*Repeating.*]

I swear it will not do its part.
Though thou dost thine, employest thy power and art.

Natural, easy Suckling!

Sir Wil. Anan? Suckling! no such suckling neither, cousin, nor stripling: I thank heaven, I'm no minor.

Mil. Ah, rustic, ruder than Gothic!

Sir Wil. Well, well, I shall understand your lingo one of these days, cousin; in the mean while I must answer in plain English.

Mil. Have you any business with me, sir Wilfull?

Sir Wil. Not at present, cousin—yes, I make bold to see, to come and know if that how you were disposed to fetch a walk this evening, if so be that I might not be troublesome, I would have sought a walk with you.

Mil. A walk! what then?

Sir Wil. Nay, nothing—only for the walk's sake, that's all.

Mil. I nauseate walking; 'tis a country diversion; I loathe the country, and everything that relates to it.

Sir Wil. Indeed! ha! look ye, look ye, you do? Nay, 'tis like you may—here are choice of pastimes here in town, as plays, and the like; that must be confessed indeed.

Mil. Ah, l'étourdi! I hate the town too.

Sir Wil. Dear heart, that's much—ha! that you should hate 'em both! ha! 'tis like you may; there are some can't relish the town, and others can't away with the country—'tis like you may be one of those, cousin.

Mil. Ha! ha! ha! yes, 'tis like I may.—You have nothing further to say to me?

Sir Wil. Not at present, cousin.—'Tis like when I have an opportunity to be more private—I may break my mind in some measure—I conjecture you partly guess—however, that's as time shall try—but spare to speak and spare to speed, as they say.

Mil. If it is of no great importance, sir Wilfull, you will oblige me to leave me; I have just now a little business—

Sir Wil. Enough, enough, cousin: yes, yes, all a case—when you're disposed: now's as well as another time; and another time as well as now. All's one for that—yes, yes, if your concerns call you, there's no haste; it will keep cold, as they say.—Cousin, your servant—I think this door's locked.

Mil. You may go this way, sir.

Sir Wil. Your servant; then with your leave I'll return to my company. [*Exit.*

Mil. Ay, ay; ha! ha! ha!

Like Phœbus sung the no less amorous boy.

SCENE V.

MILLAMANT *and* MIRABELL.

Mir. Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy. Do you lock yourself up from me, to make my search more curious? or is this pretty artifice contrived to signify that here the chase must end, and my pursuits be crowned? For you can fly no further.

Mil. Vanity! no—I'll fly, and be followed to the last moment. Though I am upon the very verge of matrimony, I expect you should solicit me as much as if I were wavering at the grate of a monastery, with one foot over the threshold. I'll be solicited to the very last, nay, and afterwards.

Mir. What, after the last?

Mil. Oh, I should think I was poor and had nothing to bestow, if I were reduced to an inglorious ease, and freed from the agreeable fatigues of solicitation.

Mir. But do not you know, that when favours are conferred upon instant and tedious solicitation, that they diminish in their value, and that both the giver loses the grace, and the receiver lessens his pleasure?

Mil. It may be in things of common application; but never sure in love. Oh, I hate a lover that can dare to think he draws a moment's air, independent on the bounty of his mistress. There is not so impudent a thing in nature, as the saucy look of an assured man, confident of success. The pedantic arrogance of a very husband has not so pragmatical an air. Ah! I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure.

Mir. Would you have 'em both before marriage? or will you be contented with the first now, and stay for the other till after grace?

Mil. Ah! don't be impertinent.—My dear liberty, shall I leave thee? my faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid you then adieu? Ay-h adieu—my morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, all ye *douceurs*, ye *sommeils du matin*, adieu?—I can't do't, 'tis more than impossible—positively, Mirabell, I'll lie abed in a morning as long as I please.

Mir. Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

Mil. Ah! idle creature, get up when you will—and d'ye hear, I won't be called names after I'm married; positively I won't be called names.

Mir. Names!

Mil. Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweetheart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar—I shall never bear that—good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my lady Fadler, and sir Francis: nor go to Hyde-park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers, and then never to be seen there together again; as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together; but let us be very strange and well-bred: let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while; and as well bred as if we were not married at all.

Mir. Have you any more conditions to offer? Hitherto your demands are pretty reasonable.

Mil. Trifles!—As liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I please; and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste; to have no obligation upon me to converse with wits that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance; or to be intimate with fools, because they may be your relations. Come to dinner when I please; dine in my dressing-room when I'm out of humour, without giving a reason. To have my closet inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And, lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

Mir. Your bill of fare is something advanced in this latter account.—Well, have I liberty to offer conditions—that when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband?

Mil. You have free leave; propose your utmost, speak and spare not.

Mir. I thank you.—*Imprimis* then, I covenant, that your acquaintance be general; that you admit no sworn confidant, or intimate of your own sex; no she friend to screen her affairs under your countenance, and tempt you to make trial of a mutual secrecy. No decoy duck to wheedle you a fop-scrambling to the play in a mask—then bring you home in a pretended fright, when you think you shall be found out—and rail at me for missing the play, and disappointing the frolic which you had to pick me up, and prove my constancy.

Mil. Detestable *imprimis!* I go to the play in a mask!

Mir. Item, I article, that you continue to like your own face, as long as I shall: and while it passes current with me, that you endeavour not to new-coin it. To which end, together with all vizards for the day, I prohibit all masks for the night, made of oiled-skins, and I know not what—hogs' bones, hares' gall, pig-water, and the marrow of a roasted cat. In short, I forbid all commerce with the gentlewoman in what d'ye call it court. *Item,* I shut my doors against all bawds with baskets, and penny-worths of muslin, china, fans, atlasses etc.—*Item,* when you shall be breeding—

Mil. Ah! name it not.

Mir. Which may be presumed with a blessing on our endeavours—

Mil. Odious endeavours!

Mir. I denounce against all strait lacing, squeezing for a shape, till you mould my boy's head like a sugar-loaf, and instead of a man-child, make me father to a crooked billet. Lastly, to the dominion of the tea-table I submit—but with proviso, that you exceed not in your province; but restrain yourself to native and simple tea-table drinks, as tea, chocolate, and coffee: as likewise to genuine and authorised tea-table talk—such as mending of fashions, spoiling reputations, railing at absent friends, and so forth—but that on no account you encroach upon the men's prerogative, and presume to drink healths, or toast fellows; for prevention of which I banish all foreign forces, all auxiliaries to the tea-table, as orange-brandy, all aniseed, cinnamon, citron and Barbadoes-waters, together with ratafia, and the most noble spirit of clary—but for cowslip wine, poppy water, and all dormitives, those I allow.—These provisos admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying husband.

Mil. O horrid provisos! filthy strong-waters! I toast fellows! odious men! I hate your odious provisos.

Mir. Then we are agreed! shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? And here comes one to be a witness to the sealing of the deed.

SCENE VI.

MILLAMANT, MIRABELL, *and* MRS. FAINALL.

Mil. Fainall, what shall I do? shall I have him? I think I must have him.

Mrs. Fain. Ay, ay, take him, take him, what should you do?

Mil. Well then—I'll take my death I'm in a horrid fright—Fainall, I shall never say it—well—I think—I'll endure you.

Mrs. Fain. Fy! fy! have him, have him, and tell him so in plain terms: for I am sure you have a mind to him.

Mil. Are you? I think I have—and the horrid man looks as if he thought so too—well, you ridiculous thing you, I'll have you—I won't be kissed, nor I won't be thanked—here kiss my hand though.—So, hold your tongue now, don't say a word.

Mrs. Fain. Mirabell, there's a necessity for your obedience;—you have neither time to talk nor stay. My mother is coming; and in my conscience if she should see you, would fall into fits, and maybe not recover time enough to return to sir Rowland, who, as Foible tells me, is in a fair way to succeed. Therefore spare your ecstacies for another occasion, and slip down the back-stairs, where Foible waits to consult you.

Mil. Ay, go, go. In the mean time I suppose you have said something to please me.

Mir. I am all obedience.

SCENE VII.

MILLAMANT *and* MRS. FAINALL.

Mrs. Fain. Yonder sir Wilfull's drunk, and so noisy that my mother has been forced to leave sir Rowland to appease him; but he answers her only with singing and drinking—what they may have done by this time I know not; but Petulant and he were upon quarrelling as I came by.

Mil. Well, if Mirabell should not make a good husband, I am a lost thing—for I find I love him violently.

Mrs. Fain. So it seems; for you mind not what's said to you.—If you doubt him, you had best take up with sir Wilfull.

Mil. How can you name that supperannuated lubber? foh!

SCENE VIII.

MILLAMANT, MRS. FAINALL, *and* WITWOUD.

Mrs. Fain. So, is the fray made up, that you have left 'em?

Wit. Left 'em? I could stay no longer—I have laughed like ten christnings—I am tipsy with laughing—if I had stayed any longer I should have burst,—I must have been let out and pieced in the sides like an unsized camlet.—Yes, yes, the fray is composed; my lady came in like a *noli prosequi*, and stopped the proceedings.

Mil. What was the dispute?

Wit. That's the jest; there was no dispute. They could neither of 'em speak for rage, and so fell a sputtering at one another like two roasting apples.

SCENE IX.

MILLAMANT, MRS. FAINALL, WITWOUD, *and* PETULANT *drunk.*

Wit. Now, Petulant, all's over, all's well. Gad my head begins to whim it about—why dost thou not speak? thou art both as drunk and as mute as a fish.

Pet. Look you, Mrs. Millamant—if you can love me, dear nymph—say it—and that's the conclusion—pass on, or pass off—that's all.

Wit. Thou hast uttered volumes, folios, in less than *decimo sexto*, my dear Lacedemonian. Sirrah, Petulant, thou art an epitomiser of words.

Pet. Witwoud—you are an annihilator of sense.

Wit. Thou art a retailer of phrases; and dost deal in remnants of remnants, like a maker of pincushions—thou art in truth (metaphorically speaking) a speaker of short-hand.

Pet. Thou art (without a figure) just one half of an ass, and Baldwin yonder, thy half-brother, is the rest.—A Gemini of asses split would make just four of you.

Wit. Thou dost bite, my dear mustard-seed; kiss me for that.

Pet. Stand off!—I'll kiss no more males—I have kissed your twin yonder in a humour of reconciliation, till he [*Hiccups*] rises upon my stomach like a radish.

Mil. Eh! filthy creature!—what was the quarrel?

Pet. There was no quarrel—there might have been a quarrel.

Wit. If there had been words enow between 'em to have expressed provocation, they had gone together by the ears like a pair of castanets.

Pet. You were the quarrel.

Mil. Me!

Pet. If I have a humour to quarrel, I can make less matters conclude premises.—If you are not handsome, what then, if I have a humour to prove it? If I shall have my reward, say so; if not, fight for your face the next time yourself—I'll go sleep.

Wit. Do, wrap thyself up like a wood-louse, and dream revenge—and hear me, if thou canst learn to write by to-morrow morning, pen me a challenge—I'll carry it for thee.

Pet. Carry your mistress's monkey a spider!—Go flea dogs, and read romances!—I'll go to bed to my maid. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Fain. He's horridly drunk.—How came you all in this pickle?

Wit. A plot! a plot! to get rid of the night—your husband's advice; but he sneaked off.

SCENE X.

SIR WILFULL *drunk*, LADY WISHFORT, WITWOUD, MILLAMANT, *and* MRS. FAINALL.

Lady Wish. Out upon't, out upon't! At years of discretion, and comport yourself at this rantipole rate!

Sir Wil. No offence, aunt.

Lady Wish. Offence! as I'm a person, I'm ashamed of you—foh! how you stink of wine! D'ye think my niece will ever endure such a Borachio! you're an absolute Borachio.

Sir Wil. Borachio?

Lady Wish. At a time when you should commence an amour, and put your best foot foremost—

Sir Wil. S'heart, an you grutch me your liquor, make a bill—give me more drink, and take my purse— [*Sings.*

Prithee fill me the glass,
Till it laugh in my face,
With ale that is potent and mellow;
He that whines for a lass,
Is an ignorant ass,
For a bumper has not its fellow.

But if you would have me marry my cousin—say the word, and I'll do't—Wilfull will do't, that's the word—Wilfull will do't, that's my crest—my motto I have forgot.

Lady Wish. My nephew's a little overtaken, cousin—but 'tis with drinking your health.—O' my word you are obliged to him.

Sir Wil. In vino veritas, aunt.—If I drunk your health to-day, cousin—I am a Borachio. But if you have a mind to be married, say the word, and send for the piper; Wilfull will do't. If not, dust it away, and let's have t'other round.—Tony!—Odds heart, where's Tony!—Tony's an honest fellow; but he spits after a bumper, and that's a fault.— [*Sings.*

We'll drink and we'll never ha' done, boys,
Put the glass then around with the sun, boys,
Let Apollo's example invite us;
For he's drunk every night,
And that makes him so bright,
That he's able next morning to light us.

The sun's a good pimple, an honest soaker; he has a cellar at your Antipodes. If I travel, aunt, I touch at your Antipodes.—Your Antipodes are a good, rascally sort of topsy-turvy fellows: if I had a bumper, I'd stand upon my head and drink a health to 'em.—A match or no match, cousin, with the hard name?—Aunt, Wilfull will do't. If she has her maidenhead, let her look to't; if she has not, let her keep her own counsel in the mean time, and cry out at the nine months' end.

Mil. Your pardon, madam, I can stay no longer—sir Wilfull grows very powerful. Eh! how he smells! I shall be overcome, if I stay.—Come, cousin.

SCENE XI.

Lady Wishfort, Sir Wilfull, Witwoud, *and* Foible.

Lady Wish. Smells! he would poison a tallow-chandler and his family! Beastly creature, I know not what to do with him!—Travel, quotha! ay, travel, travel, get thee gone, get thee gone, get thee but far enough, to the Saracens, or the Tartars, or the Turks!—for thou art not fit to live in a Christian commonwealth, thou beastly Pagan!

Sir Wil. Turks, no; no Turks, aunt: your Turks are infidels, and believe not in the grape. Your Mahometan, your Mussulman, is a dry stinkard—no offence, aunt. My map says that your Turk is not so honest a man as your Christian. I cannot find by the map that your Mufti is orthodox—whereby it is a plain case, that orthodox is a hard word, aunt, and [*Hiccups*] Greek for claret.— [*Sings.*

To drink is a Christian diversion,
Unknown to the Turk or the Persian:
Let Mahometan fools
Live by heathenish rules,
And be damn'd over tea-cups and coffee.
But let British lads sing,
Crown a health to the king,
And a fig for your sultan and sophy!

Ah Tony! [Foible *whispers* Lady Wishfort.

Lady Wish. [*Aside to* Foible.]—Sir Rowland impatient? Good lack! what shall I do with this beastly tumbril?—[*Aloud.*] Go lie down and sleep, you sot!—or, as I'm a person, I'll have you bastinadoed with broomsticks.—Call up the wenches.

Sir Wil. Ahey! wenches, where are the wenches!

Lady Wish. Dear cousin Witwoud, get him away, and you will bind me to you inviolably. I have an affair of moment that invades me with some precipitation—you will oblige me to all futurity.

Wit. Come, knight.—Pox on him, I don't know what to say to him.—Will you go to a cock-match?

Sir Wil. With a wench, Tony! Is she a shake-bag, sirrah? Let me bite your cheek for that.

Wit. Horrible! he has a breath like a bag-pipe!—Ay, ay; come, will you march, my Salopian?

Sir Wil. Lead on, little Tony—I'll follow thee, my Anthony, my Tantony, sirrah, thou shalt be my Tantony, and I'll be thy pig. [*Sings.*

And a fig for your sultan and sophy.

[*Exeunt* Sir Wilfull *and* Witwoud.

Lady Wish. This will never do. It will never make a match—at least before he has been abroad.

SCENE XII.

Lady Wishfort *and* Waitwell, *disguised as* Sir Rowland.

Lady Wish. Dear sir Rowland, I am confounded with confusion at the retrospection of my own rudeness!—I have more pardons to ask than the pope distributes in the year of jubilee. But I hope, where there is likely to be so near an alliance, we may unbend the severity of decorums, and dispense with a little ceremony.

Wait. My impatience, madam, is the effect of my transport; and till I have the possession of your adorable person, I am tantalised on the rack; and do but hang, madam, on the tenter of expectation.

Lady Wish. You have excess of gallantry, sir Rowland, and press things to a conclusion with a most prevailing vehemence.—But a day or two for decency of marriage—

Wait. For decency of funeral, madam! The delay will break my heart—or, if that should fail, I shall be poisoned. My nephew will get an inkling of my designs, and poison me—and I would willingly starve him before I die—I would gladly go out of the world with that satisfaction.—That would be some comfort to me, if I could but live so long as to be revenged on that unnatural viper!

Lady Wish. Is he so unnatural, say you? Truly I would contribute much both to the saving of your life, and the accomplishment of your revenge.—Not that I respect myself, though he has been a perfidious wretch to me.

Wait. Perfidious to you!

Lady Wish. O sir Rowland, the hours that he has died away at my feet, the tears that he has shed, the oaths that he has sworn, the palpitations that he has felt, the trances and the tremblings, the ardours and the ecstacies, the kneelings and the risings, the heart-heavings and the hand-gripings, the pangs and the pathetic regards of his protesting eyes!—Oh, no memory can register!

Wait. What, my rival! is the rebel my rival?—a'dies.

Lady Wish. No, don't kill him at once, sir Rowland, starve him gradually, inch by inch.

Wait. I'll do't. In three weeks he shall be barefoot; in a month out at knees with begging an alms.—He shall starve upward and upward, till he has nothing living but his head, and then go out in a stink like a candle's end upon a save-all.

Lady Wish. Well, sir Rowland, you have the way—you are no novice in the labyrinth of love—you have the clue.—But as I am a person, sir Rowland, you must not attribute my yielding to any sinister appetite, or indigestion of widowhood; nor impute my complacency to any lethargy of continence—I hope you do not think me prone to any iteration of nuptials—

Wait. Far be it from me—

Lady Wish. If you do, I protest I must recede—or think that I have made a prostitution of decorums; but in the vehemence of compassion, and to save the life of a person of so much importance—

Wait. I esteem it so.

Lady Wish. Or else you wrong my condescension.

Wait. I do not, I do not!

Lady Wish. Indeed you do.

Wait. I do not, fair shrine of virtue!

Lady Wish. If you think the least scruple of carnality was an ingredient—

Wait. Dear madam, no. You are all camphor and frankincense, all chastity and odour.

Lady Wish. Or that—

SCENE XIII.

Lady WISHFORT, WAITWELL, *and* FOIBLE.

Foib. Madam, the dancers are ready; and there's one with a letter, who must deliver it into your own hands.

Lady Wish. Sir Rowland, will you give me leave? Think favourably, judge candidly, and conclude you have found a person who would suffer racks in honour's cause, dear sir Rowland, and will wait on you incessantly.

SCENE XIV.

WAITWELL *and* FOIBLE.

Wait. Fy, fy!—What a slavery have I undergone! Spouse, hast thou any cordial? I want spirits.

Foib. What a washy rogue art thou, to pant thus for a quarter of an hour's lying and swearing to a fine lady!

Wait. Oh, she is the antidote to desire! Spouse, thou wilt fare the worse for't—I shall have no appetite to iteration of nuptials this eight-and-forty hours.—By this hand I'd rather be a chairman in the dog-days—than act sir Rowland till this time to-morrow!

SCENE XV.

WAITWELL, FOIBLE, *and* Lady WISHFORT, *with a letter.*

Lady Wish. Call in the dancers.—Sir Rowland, we'll sit, if you please, and see the entertainment.

A Dance.

Now, with your permission, sir Rowland, I will peruse my letter.—I would open it in your presence, because I would not make you uneasy. If it should make you uneasy, I would burn it.—Speak, if it does—but you may see the superscription is like a woman's hand.

Foib. [*Aside to* WAITWELL.] By Heaven! Mrs. Marwood's, I know it.—My heart aches—get it from her.

Wait. A woman's hand! no, madam, that's no woman's hand, I see that already. That's somebody whose throat must be cut.

Lady Wish. Nay, sir Rowland, since you give me a proof of your passion by your jealousy, I promise you I'll make a return, by a frank communication.—You shall see it—we'll open it together—look you here.—[*Reads.*]—*Madam, though unknown to you*—Look you there, 'tis from nobody that I know—*I have that honour for your character, that I think myself obliged to let you know you are abused. He who pretends to be sir Rowland, is a cheat and a rascal.*—Oh heavens! what's this?

Foib. [*Aside.*] Unfortunate! all's ruined!

Wait. How, how, let me see, let me see!—[*Reads.*] *A rascal, and disguised and suborned for that imposture,*—O villany! O villany!—*by the contrivance of*—

Lady Wish. I shall faint, I shall die, oh!

Foib. [*Aside to* WAITWELL.] Say 'tis your nephew's hand—quickly, his plot, swear it, swear it!

Wait. Here's a villain! madam, don't you perceive it, don't you see it?

Lady Wish. Too well, too well! I have seen too much.

Wait. I told you at first I knew the hand.—A woman's hand! The rascal writes a sort of a large hand; your Roman hand—I saw there was a throat to be cut presently. If he were my son, as he is my nephew, I'd pistol him!

Foib. O treachery!—But are you sure, sir Rowland, it is his writing?

Wait. Sure! am I here? do I live? do I love this pearl of India? I have twenty letters in my pocket from him in the same character.

Lady Wish. How!

Foib. O what luck it is, sir Rowland, that you were present at this juncture!—This was the business that brought Mr. Mirabell disguised to madam Millamant this afternoon. I thought something was contriving, when he stole by me and would have hid his face.

Lady Wish. How, how!—I heard the villain was in the house indeed; and now I remember, my niece went away abruptly, when sir Wilfull was to have made his addresses.

Foib. Then, then, madam, Mr. Mirabell waited for her in her chamber! but I would not tell your ladyship to discompose you when you were to receive sir Rowland.

Wait. Enough, his date is short.

Foib. No, good sir Rowland, don't incur the law.

Wait. Law! I care not for law. I can but die, and 'tis in a good cause.—My lady shall be satisfied of my truth and innocence, though it cost me my life.

Lady Wish. No, dear sir Rowland, don't fight, if you should be killed I must never show my face; or hanged—O, consider my reputation, sir Rowland!—No, you shan't fight—I'll go in and examine my niece; I'll make her confess. I conjure you, sir Rowland, by all your love, not to fight.

Wait. I am charmed, madam, I obey. But some proof you must let me give you; I'll go for a black box, which contains the writings of my whole estate, and deliver that into your hands.

Lady Wish. Ay, dear sir Rowland, that will be some comfort, bring the black box.

Wait. And may I presume to bring a contract to be signed this night? may I hope so far?

Lady Wish. Bring what you will; but come alive, pray come alive. Oh, this is a happy discovery!

Wait. Dead or alive I'll come—and married we will be in spite of treachery; ay, and get an heir that shall defeat the last remaining glimpse of hope in my abandoned nephew. Come, my buxom widow:—

Ere long you shall substantial proof receive,
That I'm an errant knight—

Foib. [*Aside.*] Or errant knave.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Lady Wishfort's *House.*

Lady Wishfort *and* Foible.

Lady Wish. Out of my house, out of my house, hou viper! thou serpent, that I have fostered! hou bosom traitress, that I raised from nothing! —Begone! begone! begone!—go! go!—That I ook from washing of old gauze and weaving of dead ıair, with a bleak blue nose over a chafing-dish of tarved embers, and dining behind a traverse rag, n a shop no bigger than a birdcage!—Go, go! tarve again, do, do!

Foib. Dear madam, I'll beg pardon on my tnees.

Lady Wish. Away! out! out!—Go, set up for ourself again!—Do, drive a trade, do, with your hree-pennyworth of small ware, flaunting upon a ›ackthread, under a brandy-seller's bulk, or against ı dead wall by a ballad-monger! Go, hang out an ›ld Frisoneer gorget, with a yard of yellow colber-een again! Do; an old gnawed mask, two rows ›f pins, and a child's fiddle; a glass necklace with he beads broken, and a quilted nightcap with one ear! Go, go, drive a trade!—These were your ommodities, you treacherous trull! this was the nerchandise you dealt in when I took you into my ıouse, placed you next myself, and made you overnante of my whole family! You have forgot his, have you, now you have feathered your ıest?

Foib. No, no, dear madam. Do but hear me, ıave but a moment's patience, I'll confess all. Mr. Mirabell seduced me; I am not the first that ıe has wheedled with his dissembling tongue; your adyship's own wisdom has been deluded by him; hen how should I, a poor ignorant, defend myself? O madam, if you knew but what he promised me, ınd how he assured me your ladyship should come o no damage!—Or else the wealth of the Indies hould not have bribed me to conspire against so good, so sweet, so kind a lady as you have been o me.

Lady Wish. No damage! What, to betray me, ınd marry me to a cast-servingman! to make me a eceptacle, an hospital for a decayed pimp! No lamage! O thou frontless impudence, more than ı big-bellied actress!

Foib. Pray, do but hear me, madam; he could not marry your ladyship, madam.—No, indeed, his narriage was to have been void in law, for he was married to me first, to secure your ladyship. He ould not have bedded your ladyship; for if he had onsummated with your ladyship, he must have run he risk of the law, and been put upon his clergy. —Yes, indeed, I inquired of the law in that case ›efore I would meddle or make.

Lady Wish. What then, I have been your property, have I! I have been convenient to you, it seems!—While you were catering for Mirabell, I have been broker for you! What, have you made a passive bawd of me?—This exceeds all precedent; I am brought to fine uses, to become a botcher of second-hand marriages between Abigails and Andrews!—I'll couple you!—Yes, I'll baste you together, you and your Philander! I'll Duke's-place you, as I am a person! Your turtle is in custody already: you shall coo in the same cage, if there be a constable or warrant in the parish. [*Exit.*

Foib. Oh that ever I was born! Oh that I was ever married!—A bride!—ay, I shall be a Bridewell-bride.—Oh!

SCENE II.

Mrs. Fainall *and* Foible.

Mrs. Fain. Poor Foible, what's the matter?

Foib. O madam, my lady 's gone for a constable! I shall be had to a justice, and put to Bridewell to beat hemp. Poor Waitwell's gone to prison already.

Mrs. Fain. Have a good heart, Foible; Mirabell's gone to give security for him. This is all Marwood's and my husband's doing.

Foib. Yes, yes; I know it, madam: she was in my lady's closet, and overheard all that you said to me before dinner. She sent the letter to my lady; and that missing effect, Mr. Fainall laid this plot to arrest Waitwell, when he pretended to go for the papers; and in the mean time Mrs. Marwood declared all to my lady.

Mrs. Fain. Was there no mention made of me in the letter? My mother does not suspect my being in the confederacy? I fancy Marwood has not told her, though she has told my husband.

Foib. Yes, madam; but my lady did not see that part; we stifled the letter before she read so far.—Has that mischievous devil told Mr. Fainall of your ladyship then?

Mrs. Fain. Ay, all's out—my affair with Mirabell—everything discovered. This is the last day of our living together, that's my comfort.

Foib. Indeed, madam; and so 'tis a comfort if you knew all;—he has been even with your ladyship, which I could have told you long enough since, but I love to keep peace and quietness by my goodwill. I had rather bring friends together, than set 'em at distance: but Mrs. Marwood and he are nearer related than ever their parents thought for.

Mrs. Fain. Sayest thou so, Foible? canst thou prove this?

Foib. I can take my oath of it, madam; so can Mrs. Mincing. We have had many a fair word from Madam Marwood, to conceal something that passed in our chamber one evening when you were at Hyde-park; and we were thought to have gone a-walking, but we went up unawares;—though we were sworn to secrecy too. Madam Marwood took a book and swore us upon it, but it was but a book of poems. So long as it was not a bible-oath, we may break it with a safe conscience.

Mrs. Fain. This discovery is the most opportune thing I could wish.—Now, Mincing!

SCENE III.

Mrs. Fainall, Foible, *and* Mincing.

Min. My lady would speak with Mrs. Foible, mem. Mr. Mirabell is with her; he has set your spouse at liberty, Mrs. Foible, and would have you hide yourself in my lady's closet till my old lady's anger is abated. Oh, my old lady is in a perilous passion at something Mr. Fainall has said! he swears, and my old lady cries. There's a fearful hurricane, I vow. He says, mem, how that he'll have my lady's fortune made over to him, or he'll be divorced.

Mrs. Fain. Does your lady or Mirabell know that?

Min. Yes, mem; they have sent me to see if sir Wilfull be sober, and to bring him to them. My lady is resolved to have him, I think, rather than lose such a vast sum as six thousand pounds.—O come, Mrs. Foible, I hear my old lady.

Mrs. Fain. Foible, you must tell Mincing that she must prepare to vouch when I call her.

Foib. Yes, yes, madam.

Min. O yes, mem, I'll vouch anything for your ladyship's service, be what it will.

SCENE IV.

Mrs. Fainall, Lady Wishfort, *and* Mrs. Marwood.

Lady Wish. O my dear friend, how can I enumerate the benefits that I have received from your goodness! To you I owe the timely discovery of the false vows of Mirabell; to you I owe the detection of the impostor sir Rowland. And now you are become an intercessor with my son-in-law, to save the honour of my house, and compound for the frailties of my daughter. Well, friend, you are enough to reconcile me to the bad world, or else I would retire to deserts and solitudes, and feed harmless sheep by groves and purling streams. Dear Marwood, let us leave the world, and retire by ourselves and be shepherdesses.

Mar. Let us first despatch the affair in hand, madam. We shall have leisure to think of retirement afterwards. Here is one who is concerned in the treaty.

Lady Wish. O daughter, daughter! is it possible thou shouldst be my child, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and, as I may say, another me, and yet transgress the most minute particle of severe virtue? Is it possible you should lean aside to iniquity, who have been cast in the direct mould of virtue? I have not only been a mould but a pattern for you, and a model for you, after you were brought into the world.

Mrs. Fain. I don't understand your ladyship.

Lady Wish. Not understand! Why, have you not been naught? have you not been sophisticated? Not understand! here I am ruined to compound for your caprices and your cuckoldoms. I must pawn my plate and my jewels, and ruin my niece, and all little enough—

Mrs. Fain. I am wronged and abused, and so are you. 'Tis a false accusation, as false as hell, as false as your friend there, ay, or your friend's friend, my false husband.

Mar. My friend, Mrs. Fainall! your husband my friend! what do you mean?

Mrs. Fain. I know what I mean, madam, and so do you; and so shall the world at a time convenient.

Mar. I am sorry to see you so passionate, madam. More temper would look more like innocence. But I have done. I am sorry my zeal to serve your ladyship and family should admit of misconstruction, or make me liable to affronts. You will pardon me, madam, if I meddle no more with an affair in which I am not personally concerned.

Lady Wish. O dear friend, I am so ashamed that you should meet with such returns!—[*To* Mrs. Fainall.] You ought to ask pardon on your knees, ungrateful creature! she deserves more from you than all your life can accomplish.—[*To* Mrs. Marwood.] Oh, don't leave me destitute in this perplexity!—no, stick to me, my good genius.

Mrs. Fain. I tell you, madam, you are abused.—Stick to you! ay, like a leech, to suck your best blood—she'll drop off when she's full. Madam, you shan't pawn a bodkin, nor part with a brass counter, in composition for me. I defy 'em all. Let 'em prove their aspersions; I know my own innocence, and dare stand a trial.

SCENE V.

Lady Wishfort *and* Mrs. Marwood.

Lady Wish. Why, if she should be innocent, if she should be wronged after all, ha?—I don't know what to think;—and I promise you her education has been unexceptionable—I may say it; for I chiefly made it my own care to initiate her very infancy in the rudiments of virtue, and to impress upon her tender years a young odium and aversion to the very sight of men:—ay, friend, she would ha' shrieked if she had but seen a man, till she was in her teens. As I am a person 'tis true:—she was never suffered to play with a male child, though but in coats; nay, her very babies were of the feminine gender. Oh, she never looked a man in the face but her own father, or the chaplain, and him we made a shift to put upon her for a woman, by the help of his long garments, and his sleek face, till she was going in her fifteen.

Mar. 'Twas much she should be deceived so long.

Lady Wish. I warrant you, or she would never have borne to have been catechised by him; and have heard his long lectures against singing and dancing, and such debaucheries; and going to filthy plays, and profane music-meetings, where the lewd trebles squeak nothing but bawdy, and the basses roar blasphemy. Oh, she would have swooned at the sight or name of an obscene play-book!—and can I think, after all this, that my daughter can be naught? What, a whore? and thought it excommunication to set her foot within the door of a playhouse! O dear friend, I can't believe it, no, no! as she says, let him prove it, let him prove it.

Mar. Prove it, madam! What, and have your name prostituted in a public court! yours and your daughter's reputation worried at the bar by a pack of bawling lawyers! To be ushered in with an O yes of scandal; and have your case opened by an old fumbling lecher in a quoif like a man-midwife; to bring your daughter's infamy to light; to be a theme for legal punsters and quibblers by the statute; and become a jest against a rule of

court, where there is no precedent for a jest in any record—not even in doomsday-book; to discompose the gravity of the bench, and provoke naughty interrogatories in more naughty law Latin; while the good judge, tickled with the proceeding, simpers under a grey beard, and fidges off and on his cushion as if he had swallowed cantharides, or sat upon cow-itch!—

Lady Wish. Oh, 'tis very hard!

Mar. And then to have my young revellers of the Temple take notes, like 'prentices at a conventicle; and after talk it over again in commons, or before drawers in an eating-house.

Lady Wish. Worse and worse!

Mar. Nay, this is nothing; if it would end here 'twere well. But it must, after this, be consigned by the short-hand writers to the public press; and from thence be transferred to the hands, nay into the throats and lungs of hawkers, with voices more licentious than the loud flounder-man's: and this you must hear till you are stunned; nay, you must hear nothing else for some days.

Lady Wish. Oh, 'tis insupportable! No, no, dear friend, make it up, make it up; ay, ay, I'll compound. I'll give up all, myself and my all, my niece and her all—anything, everything for composition.

Mar. Nay, madam, I advise nothing, I only lay before you, as a friend, the inconveniences which perhaps you have overseen. Here comes Mr. Fainall; if he will be satisfied to huddle up all in silence, I shall be glad. You must think I would rather congratulate than condole with you.

SCENE VI.

Lady Wishfort, Mrs. Marwood, *and* Fainall.

Lady Wish. Ay, ay, I do not doubt it, dear Marwood: no, no, I do not doubt it.

Fain. Well, madam; I have suffered myself to be overcome by the importunity of this lady your friend; and am content you shall enjoy your own proper estate during life, on condition you oblige yourself never to marry, under such penalty as I think convenient.

Lady Wish. Never to marry!

Fain. No more sir Rowlands;—the next imposture may not be so timely detected.

Mar. That condition, I dare answer, my lady will consent to without difficulty; she has already but too much experienced the perfidiousness of men.—Besides, madam, when we retire to our pastoral solitude we shall bid adieu to all other thoughts.

Lady Wish. Ay, that's true; but in case of necessity, as of health, or some such emergency—

Fain. Oh, if you are prescribed marriage, you shall be considered; I will only reserve to myself the power to choose for you. If your physic be wholesome, it matters not who is your apothecary. Next, my wife shall settle on me the remainder of her fortune, not made over already; and for her maintenance depend entirely on my discretion.

Lady Wish. This is most inhumanly savage; exceeding the barbarity of a Muscovite husband.

Fain. I learned it from his Czarish majesty's retinue, in a winter evening's conference over brandy and pepper, amongst other secrets of matrimony and policy, as they are at present practised in the northern hemisphere. But this must be agreed unto, and that positively. Lastly, I will be endowed, in right of my wife, with that six thousand pounds, which is the moiety of Mrs. Millamant's fortune in your possession; and which she has forfeited (as will appear by the last will and testament of your deceased husband, sir Jonathan Wishfort) by her disobedience in contracting herself against your consent or knowledge; and by refusing the offered match with sir Wilfull Witwoud, which you, like a careful aunt, had provided for her.

Lady Wish. My nephew was *non compos*, and could not make his addresses.

Fain. I come to make demands—I'll hear no objections.

Lady Wish. You will grant me time to consider?

Fain. Yes, while the instrument is drawing, to which you must set your hand till more sufficient deeds can be perfected: which I will take care shall be done with all possible speed. In the meanwhile I'll go for the said instrument, and till my return you may balance this matter in your own discretion.

SCENE VII.

Lady Wishfort *and* Mrs. Marwood.

Lady Wish. This insolence is beyond all precedent, all parallel; must I be subject to this merciless villain?

Mar. 'Tis severe indeed, madam, that you should smart for your daughter's wantonness.

Lady Wish. 'Twas against my consent that she married this barbarian, but she would have him, though her year was not out.—Ah! her first husband, my son Languish, would not have carried it thus. Well, that was my choice, this is hers; she is matched now with a witness.—I shall be mad!—Dear friend, is there no comfort for me? must I live to be confiscated at this rebel-rate?—Here come two more of my Egyptian plagues too.

SCENE VIII.

Lady Wishfort, Mrs. Marwood, Millamant, *and* Sir Wilfull Witwoud.

Sir Wil. Aunt, your servant.

Lady Wish. Out caterpillar, call not me aunt! I know thee not!

Sir Wil. I confess I have been a little in disguise, as they say.—S'heart! and I'm sorry for't. What would you have? I hope I have committed no offence, aunt—and if I did I am willing to make satisfaction; and what can a man say fairer? If I have broke anything I'll pay for't, an it cost a pound. And so let that content for what's past, and make no more words. For what's to come, to pleasure you I'm willing to marry my cousin. So pray let's all be friends, she and I are agreed upon the matter before a witness.

Lady Wish. How's this, dear niece? have I any comfort? can this be true?

Mil. I am content to be a sacrifice to your repose, madam; and to convince you that I had no hand in the plot, as you were misinformed, I have laid my commands on Mirabell to come in person, and be a witness that I give my hand to this flower of knighthood: and for the contract that passed

between Mirabell and me, I have obliged him to make a resignation of it in your ladyship's presence;—he is without, and waits your leave for admittance.

Lady Wish. Well, I'll swear I am something revived at this testimony of your obedience; but I cannot admit that traitor.—I fear I cannot fortify myself to support his appearance. He is as terrible to me as a gorgon; if I see him I fear I shall turn, to stone, and petrify incessantly.

Mil. If you disoblige him, he may resent your refusal, and insist upon the contract still. Then 'tis the last time he will be offensive to you.

Lady Wish. Are you sure it will be the last time?—If I were sure of that—shall I never see him again?

Mil. Sir Wilfull, you and he are to travel together, are you not?

Sir Wil. S'heart, the gentleman's a civil gentleman, aunt, let him come in; why, we are sworn brothers and fellow-travellers.—We are to be Pylades and Orestes, he and I.—He is to be my interpreter in foreign parts. He has been overseas once already; and with proviso that I marry my cousin, will cross 'em once again, only to bear me company.—S'heart, I'll call him in,—an I set on't once, he shall come in; and see who'll hinder him. [*Goes to the door and hems.*

Mar. This is precious fooling, if it would pass; but I'll know the bottom of it.

Lady Wish. O dear Marwood, you are not going?

Mar. Not far, madam; I'll return immediately.

SCENE IX.

Lady Wishfort, Millamant, Sir Wilfull, *and* Mirabell.

Sir Wil. Look up, man, I'll stand by you; 'sbud an she do frown, she can't kill you;—besides—harkee, she dare not frown desperately, because her face is none of her own. S'heart, an she should, her forehead would wrinkle like the coat of a cream-cheese; but mum for that, fellow-traveller.

Mir. If a deep sense of the many injuries I have offered to so good a lady, with a sincere remorse, and a hearty contrition, can but obtain the least glance of compassion, I am too happy.—Ah, madam, there was a time!—but let it be forgotten—I confess I have deservedly forfeited the high place I once held of sighing at your feet. Nay, kill me not, by turning from me in disdain.—I come not to plead for favour;—nay, not for pardon; I am a suppliant only for pity—I am going where I never shall behold you more—

Sir Wil. How, fellow-traveller! you shall go by yourself then.

Mir. Let me be pitied first, and afterwards forgotten.—I ask no more.

Sir Wil. By'r Lady, a very reasonable request, and will cost you nothing, aunt! Come, come, forgive and forget, aunt; why you must an you are a Christian.

Mir. Consider, madam, in reality, you could not receive much prejudice; it was an innocent device; though I confess it had a face of guiltiness,—it was at most an artifice which love contrived;—and errors which love produces have ever been accounted venial. At least think it is punishment enough, that I have lost what in my heart I hold most dear, that to your cruel indignation I have offered up this beauty, and with her my peace and quiet; nay, all my hopes of future comfort.

Sir Wil. An he does not move me, would I may never be o' the quorum!—an it were not as good a deed as to drink, to give her to him again, I would I might never take shipping!—Aunt, if you don't forgive quickly, I shall melt, I can tell you that. My contract went no farther than a little mouth-glue, and that's hardly dry;—one doleful sigh more from my fellow-traveller, and 'tis dissolved.

Lady Wish. Well, nephew, upon your account—Ah, he has a false insinuating tongue!—Well, sir, I will stifle my just resentment at my nephew's request.—I will endeavour what I can to forget,—but on proviso that you resign the contract with my niece immediately.

Mir. It is in writing, and with papers of concern; but I have sent my servant for it, and will deliver it to you, with all acknowledgments for your transcendent goodness.

Lady Wish.—[*Aside.*] Oh, he has witchcraft in his eyes and tongue!—When I did not see him, I could have bribed a villain to his assassination; but his appearance rakes the embers which have so long lain smothered in my breast.

SCENE X.

Lady Wishfort, Millamant, Sir Wilfull, Mirabell, Fainall, *and* Mrs. Marwood.

Fain. Your date of deliberation, madam, is expired. Here is the instrument; are you prepared to sign?

Lady Wish. If I were prepared, I am not impowered. My niece exerts a lawful claim, having matched herself by my direction to sir Wilfull.

Fain. That sham is too gross to pass on me—though 'tis imposed on you, madam.

Mil. Sir, I have given my consent.

Mir. And, sir, I have resigned my pretensions.

Sir Wil. And, sir, I assert my right; and will maintain it in defiance of you, sir, and of your instrument. S'heart, an you talk of an instrument, sir, I have an old fox by my thigh shall hack your instrument of ram vellum to shreds, sir!—it shall not be sufficient for a mittimus or a tailor's measure. Therefore withdraw your instrument, sir, or, by'r Lady, I shall draw mine.

Lady Wish. Hold, nephew, hold!

Mil. Good sir Wilfull, respite your valour.

Fain. Indeed! Are you provided of your guard, with your single beef-eater there? but I'm prepared for you, and insist upon my first proposal. You shall submit your own estate to my management, and absolutely make over my wife's to my sole use, as pursuant to the purport and tenor of this other covenant.—I suppose, madam, your consent is not requisite in this case; nor, Mr. Mirabell, your resignation; nor, sir Wilfull, your right.—You may draw your fox if you please, sir, and make a bear-garden flourish somewhere else; for here it will not avail. This, my lady Wishfort, must be subscribed, or your darling daughter's turned adrift, like a leaky hulk, to sink or swim, as she and the current of this lewd town can agree.

Lady Wish. Is there no means, no remedy to stop my ruin? Ungrateful wretch! dost thou

not owe thy being, thy subsistence, to my daughter's fortune?

Fain. I'll answer you when I have the rest of it in my possession.

Mir. But that you would not accept of a remedy from my hands—I own I have not deserved you should owe any obligation to me; or else perhaps I could advise—

Lady Wish. O what? what? to save me and my child from ruin, from want, I'll forgive all that's past; nay, I'll consent to anything to come, to be delivered from this tyranny.

Mir. Ay, madam; but that is too late, my reward is intercepted. You have disposed of her who only could have made me a compensation for all my services; but be it as it may, I am resolved I'll serve you; you shall not be wronged in this savage manner.

Lady Wish. How! dear Mr. Mirabell, can you be so generous at last! But it is not possible. Harkee, I'll break my nephew's match; you shall have my niece yet, and all her fortune, if you can but save me from this imminent danger.

Mir. Will you? I'll take you at your word. I ask no more. I must have leave for two criminals to appear.

Lady Wish. Ay, ay, anybody, anybody!

Mir. Foible is one, and a penitent.

SCENE XI.

Lady Wishfort, Millamant, Sir Wilfull, Mirabell, Fainall, Mrs. Marwood, Mrs. Fainall, Foible, *and* Mincing.

Mar. O my shame! [Mirabell *and* Lady Wishfort *go to* Mrs. Fainall *and* Foible.] These corrupt things are brought hither to expose me. [*To* Fainall.

Fain. If it must all come out, why let 'em know it; 'tis but the way of the world. That shall not urge me to relinquish or abate one tittle of my terms; no, I will insist the more.

Foib. Yes indeed, madam, I'll take my bible oath of it.

Min. And so will I, mem.

Lady Wish. O Marwood, Marwood, art thou false? my friend deceive me! hast thou been a wicked accomplice with that profligate man?

Mar. Have you so much ingratitude and injustice to give credit against your friend, to the aspersions of two such mercenary trulls?

Min. Mercenary, mem? I scorn your words. 'Tis true we found you and Mr. Fainall in the blue garret; by the same token, you swore us to secrecy upon Messalina's poems. Mercenary! No, if we would have been mercenary, we should have held our tongues; you would have bribed us sufficiently.

Fain. Go, you are an insignificant thing!—Well, what are you the better for this? is this Mr. Mirabell's expedient? I'll be put off no longer.—You thing, that was a wife, shall smart for this! I will not leave thee wherewithal to hide thy shame; your body shall be naked as your reputation.

Mrs. Fain. I despise you, and defy your malice! —you have aspersed me wrongfully—I have proved your falsehood—go you and your treacherous—I will not name it, but starve together—perish!

Fain. Not while you are worth a groat, indeed, my dear.—Madam, I'll be fooled no longer.

Lady Wish. Ah, Mr. Mirabell, this is small comfort, the detection of this affair.

Mir. Oh, in good time—your leave for the other offender and penitent to appear, madam.

SCENE XII.

Lady Wishfort, Millamant, Sir Wilfull, Mirabell, Fainall, Mrs. Fainall, Mrs. Marwood, Foible, Mincing, *and* Waitwell, *with a box of writings.*

Lady Wish. O sir Rowland!—Well, rascal!

Wait. What your ladyship pleases. I have brought the black box at last, madam.

Mir. Give it me.—Madam, you remember your promise.

Lady Wish. Ay, dear sir.

Mir. Where are the gentlemen?

Wait. At hand, sir, rubbing their eyes—just risen from sleep.

Fain. 'Sdeath, what's this to me? I'll not wait your private concerns.

SCENE XIII.

Lady Wishfort, Millamant, Sir Wilfull, Mirabell, Fainall, Mrs. Marwood, Mrs. Fainall, Foible, Mincing, Waitwell, Petulant, *and* Witwoud.

Pet. How now? What's the matter? whose hand's out?

Wit. Heyday! what, are you all got together, like players at the end of the last act?

Mir. You may remember, gentlemen, I once requested your hands as witnesses to a certain parchment.

Wit. Ay, I do, my hand I remember—Petulant set his mark.

Mir. You wrong him, his name is fairly written, as shall appear.—You do not remember, gentlemen, anything of what that parchment contained?— [*Undoing the box.*

Wit. No.

Pet. Not I; I writ, I read nothing.

Mir. Very well, now you shall know.—Madam, your promise.

Lady Wish. Ay, ay, sir, upon my honour.

Mir. Mr. Fainall, it is now time that you should know, that your lady, while she was at her own disposal, and before you had by your insinuations wheedled her out of a pretended settlement of the greatest part of her fortune—

Fain. Sir! pretended!

Mir. Yes, sir. I say that this lady while a widow, having it seems received some cautions respecting your inconstancy and tyranny of temper, which from her own partial opinion and fondness of you she could never have suspected—she did, I say, by the wholesome advice of friends, and of sages learned in the laws of this land, deliver this same as her act and deed to me in trust, and to the uses within mentioned. You may read if you please—[*Holding out the parchment*] though perhaps what is written on the back may serve your occasions.

Fain. Very likely, sir. What's here?—Damnation!—[*Reads.*] *A deed of conveyance of the whole estate real of Arabella Languish, widow, in trust to Edward Mirabell.*—Confusion!

Mir. Even so, sir; 'tis the Way of the World,

sir; of the widows of the world. I suppose this deed may bear an elder date than what you have obtained from your lady.

Fain. Perfidious fiend! then thus I'll be revenged. [*Offers to run at* Mrs. Fainall.

Sir Wil. Hold, sir! now you may make your bear-garden flourish somewhere else, sir.

Fain. Mirabell, you shall hear of this, sir, be sure you shall.—Let me pass, oaf! [*Exit.*

Mrs. Fain. Madam, you seem to stifle your resentment; you had better give it vent.

Mar. Yes, it shall have vent—and to your confusion; or I'll perish in the attempt.

SCENE XIV.

Lady Wishfort, Millamant, Mirabell, Mrs. Fainall, Sir Wilfull, Petulant, Witwoud, Foible, Mincing, *and* Waitwell.

Lady Wish. O daughter, daughter! 'tis plain thou hast inherited thy mother's prudence.

Mrs. Fain. Thank Mr. Mirabell, a cautious friend, to whose advice all is owing.

Lady Wish. Well, Mr. Mirabell, you have kept your promise—and I must perform mine.—First, I pardon, for your sake, sir Rowland there, and Foible; the next thing is to break the matter to my nephew—and how to do that—

Mir. For that, madam, give yourself no trouble; let me have your consent. Sir Wilfull is my friend; he has had compassion upon lovers, and generously engaged a volunteer in this action, for our service; and now designs to prosecute his travels.

Sir Wil. S'heart, aunt, I have no mind to marry. My cousin's a fine lady, and the gentleman loves her, and she loves him, and they deserve one another; my resolution is to see foreign parts—I have set on't—and when I'm set on't I must do't. And if these two gentlemen would travel too, I think they may be spared.

Pet. For my part, I say little—I think things are best off or on.

Wit. I'gad, I understand nothing of the matter; I'm in a maze yet, like a dog in a dancing-school.

Lady Wish. Well, sir, take her, and with her all the joy I can give you.

Mil. Why does not the man take me? would you have me give myself to you over again?

Mir. Ay, and over and over again; [*Kisses her hand.*] I would have you as often as possibly I can. Well, heaven grant I love you not too well, that's all my fear.

Sir Wil. S'heart, you'll have time enough to toy after you're married; or if you will toy now, let us have a dance in the mean time, that we who are not lovers may have some other employment besides looking on.

Mir. With all my heart, dear sir Wilfull. What shall we do for music?

Foib. O sir, some that were provided for sir Rowland's entertainment are yet within call.

A Dance.

Lady Wish. As I am a person, I can hold out no longer;—I have wasted my spirits so to-day already, that I am ready to sink under the fatigue; and I cannot but have some fears upon me yet, that my son Fainall will pursue some desperate course.

Mir. Madam, disquiet not yourself on that account; to my knowledge his circumstances are such he must of force comply. For my part, I will contribute all that in me lies to a reunion; in the mean time, madam,—[*To* Mrs. Fainall.] let me before these witnesses restore to you this deed of trust; it may be a means, well-managed, to make you live easily together.

From hence let those be warn'd, who mean to wed;
Lest mutual falsehood stain the bridal bed;
For each deceiver to his cost may find,
That marriage-frauds too oft are paid in kind.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. BRACEGIRDLE.

After our Epilogue this crowd dismisses,
I'm thinking how this play'll be pull'd to pieces.
But pray consider, ere you doom its fall,
How hard a thing 'twould be to please you all.
There are some critics so with spleen diseased,
They scarcely come inclining to be pleased:
And sure he must have more than mortal skill,
Who pleases any one against his will.
Then all bad poets we are sure are foes,
And how their number's swell'd, the town well knows:
In shoals I've mark'd 'em judging in the pit;
Though they're, on no pretence, for judgment fit,
But that they have been damn'd for want of wit.
Since when, they by their own offences taught,
Set up for spies on plays, and finding fault.
Others there are whose malice we'd prevent;
Such who watch plays with scurrilous intent
To mark out who by characters are meant.
And though no perfect likeness they can trace,
Yet each pretends to know the copied face.
These with false glosses feed their own ill nature,
And turn to libel what was meant a satire.
May such malicious fops this fortune find,
To think themselves alone the fools design'd:
If any are so arrogantly vain,
To think they singly can support a scene,
And furnish fool enough to entertain.
For well the learn'd and the judicious know
That satire scorns to stoop so meanly low,
As any one abstracted fop to show.
For, as when painters form a matchless face,
They from each fair one catch some different grace;
And shining features in one portrait blend,
To which no single beauty must pretend;
So poets oft do in one piece expose
Whole belles-assemblees of coquettes and beaux.

THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS.

A Masque.

——— Vincis utramque Venus.
OVID. de Arte Amandi, lib. I.

ARGUMENT.

THE Goddess of Discord, at the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, conveys a Golden Apple among the Goddesses, with this inscription on it, *To the Fairest.* Juno, Pallas, and Venus lay claim to it, and each demands it as her due Jupiter sends them, under the conduct of Mercury, to Paris, a shepherd on Mount Ida, to be judge in this contest. Each Goddess pleads her right, but Paris decrees in favour of Venus, and gives her the Apple.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PARIS.	VENUS.
MERCURY.	Cupids.
JUNO.	Graces.
PALLAS.	Hours.

SCENE,—MOUNT IDA.

The scene is a landscape of a beautiful pasture supposed on Mount Ida. The Shepherd PARIS *is seen seated under a tree, and playing on his pipe; his crook and scrip &c. lying by him. While a symphony is playing,* MERCURY *descends with his caduceus in one hand, and an apple of gold in the other; after the symphony he sings.*

Mercury. From high Olympus, and the realms above,
Behold I come the messenger of Jove;
His dread commands I bear:
Shepherd, arise and hear;
Arise, and leave a while thy rural care;
Forbear thy woolly flock to feed,
And lay aside thy tuneful reed;
For thou to greater honours art decreed.

Paris. O Hermes, I thy godhead know,
By thy winged heels and head,
By thy rod that wakes the dead,
And guides the shades below.
Say wherefore dost thou seek this humble plain,
To greet a lowly swain?
What does the mighty thunderer ordain?

Mer. This radiant fruit behold,
More bright than burnish'd gold;
Three Goddesses for this contend;
See now they descend,
And this way they bend.
Shepherd, take the golden prize,
Yield it to the brightest eyes.

[JUNO, PALLAS, *and* VENUS, *are seen at a distance descending in several machines.*

Par. O ravishing delight!
What mortal can support the sight?
Alas! too weak is human brain,
So much rapture to sustain.
I faint, I fall! O take me hence,
Ere ecstacy invades my aching sense.
Help me, Hermes, or I die,
Save me from excess of joy.

Mer. Fear not, mortal, none shall harm thee;
With my sacred rod I'll charm thee.
Freely gaze and view all over,
Thou mayst every grace discover.
Though a thousand darts fly round thee,
Fear not, mortal, none shall wound thee.

Duett.

Mer. Happy thou of human race,
Gods with thee would change their place!

Par. With no god I'd change my place,
Happy I of human race. [MERCURY *ascends.*

[*While a symphony is playing,* JUNO *descends from her machine; after the symphony she sings.*

Juno. Saturnia, wife of thundering Jove am I,
Beloved by him, and empress of the sky;
Shepherd, fix on me thy wondering sight,
Beware, and view me well, and judge aright.
[*Symphony for* PALLAS.

Pallas. This way, mortal, bend thy eyes,
Pallas claims the golden prize:
A virgin goddess free from stain,
And queen of arts and arms I reign.
[*Symphony for* VENUS.

Venus. Hither turn thee, gentle swain,
Let not Venus sue in vain;

Venus rules the gods above,
Love rules them, and she rules Love.
Hither turn thee, gentle swain.
Pal. Hither turn to me again.
Juno. Turn to me, for I am she.
All three. To me, to me, for I am she.
Ven. Hither turn thee, gentle swain.
Juno and Pal. She will deceive thee.
Ven. They will deceive thee, I'll never leave thee.

Chorus of the three Goddesses.

Hither turn to me again,
To me, to me, for I am she;
Hither turn thee, gentle swain.
Par. Distracted I turn, but I cannot decide;
So equal a title sure never was tried.
United, your beauties so dazzle the sight,
That lost in amaze,
I giddily gaze,
Confused and o'erwhelm'd with a torrent of light.

Apart let me view then each heavenly fair,
For three at a time there's no mortal can bear;
And since a gay robe an ill shape may disguise,
When each is undrest,
I'll judge of the best,
For 'tis not a face that must carry the prize.

JUNO *sings.*

Let ambition fire thy mind,
Thou wert born o'er men to reign,
Not to follow flocks design'd;
Scorn thy crook, and leave the plain.

Crowns I'll throw beneath thy feet,
Thou on necks of kings shall tread,
Joys in circles joys shall meet,
Which way e'er thy fancies lead.

Let not toils of empire fright,
Toils of empire pleasures are;
Thou shalt only know delight,
All the joy, but not the care.

Shepherd, if thou'lt yield the prize
For the blessings I bestow,
Joyful I'll ascend the skies,
Happy thou shalt reign below.

Chorus.

Let ambition fire thy mind,
Thou wert born o'er men to reign,
Not to follow flocks design'd;
Scorn thy crook, and leave the plain.

PALLAS *sings.*

Awake, awake, thy spirits raise,
Waste not thus thy youthful days,
Piping, toying,
—Nymphs decoying,
Lost in wanton and inglorious ease!

Hark, hark! the glorious voice of war
Calls aloud, for arms prepare:
Drums are beating,
Rocks repeating,
Martial music charms the joyful air. [*Symphony.*

PALLAS *sings.*

O what joys does conquest yield!
When returning from the field,
O how glorious 'tis to see
The godlike hero crown'd with victory!
Laurel wreaths his head surrounding,
Banners waving in the wind,
Fame her golden trumpet sounding,
Every voice in chorus join'd.
To me, kind swain, the prize resign,
And fame and conquest shall be thine.

Chorus.

O how glorious 'tis to see
The godlike hero crown'd with victory! [*Symphony.*

VENUS *sings.*

Stay, lovely youth, delay thy choice;
Take heed lest empty names enthral thee;
Attend to Cytherea's voice;
Lo! I who am Love's mother call thee.
Far from thee be anxious care,
And racking thoughts that vex the great:
Empire's but a gilded snare,
And fickle is the warrior's fate:
One only joy mankind can know,
And love alone can that bestow.

Chorus.

One only joy, &c.

VENUS *sings.*

Nature framed thee sure for loving,
Thus adorn'd with every grace;
Venus' self thy form approving,
Looks with pleasure on thy face.

Happy nymph who shall enfold thee,
Circled in her yielding arms!
Should bright Helen once behold thee,
She'd surrender all her charms.

Fairest she, all nymphs transcending,
That the sun himself has seen,
Were she for the crown contending,
Thou wouldst own her beauty's queen.

Gentle shepherd, if my pleading
Can from thee the prize obtain,
Love himself thy conquest aiding,
Thou that matchless fair shalt gain.

Par. I yield, I yield, O take the prize,
And cease, O cease the enchanting song!
All Love's darts are in thy eyes,
And harmony falls from thy tongue!
Forbear, O goddess of desire,
Thus my ravish'd soul to move;
Forbear to fan the raging fire,
And be propitious to my love.

[*Here* PARIS *gives to* VENUS *the Golden Apple. Several* Cupids *descend, the three* Graces *alight from the chariot of* VENUS, *they call the* Hours, *who assemble, with all the attendants on* VENUS. *All join in a circle round her, and sing the last grand chorus, while* JUNO *and* PALLAS *ascend.*

Grand Chorus.

Hither all ye Graces, all ye Loves,
Hither all ye Hours resort;
Billing sparrows, cooing doves;
Come all the train of Venus' court!
Sing all great Cytherea's name;
Over empire, over fame,
Her victory proclaim.
Sing, sing and spread the joyful news around,
The queen of love is queen of beauty crown'd.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

SEMELE.

An Opera.

A natura discedimus; populo nos damus, nullius rei bono auctori, et in hac re, sicut in omnibus, inconstantissimo.—SENECA, Epist. 99.

ARGUMENT.

AFTER Jupiter's amour with Europa, the daughter of Agenor king of Phœnicia, he again incenses Juno by a new affair in the same family; viz. with Semele, niece to Europa, and daughter to Cadmus king of Thebes. Semele is on the point of marriage with Athamas; which marriage is about to be solemnised in the temple of Juno goddess of marriages, when Jupiter by ill omens interrupts the ceremony; and afterwards transports Semele to a private abode prepared for her. Juno, after many contrivances, at length assumes the shape and voice of Ino, sister to Semele; by the help of which disguise and artful insinuations she prevails with her to make a request to Jupiter, which being granted must end in her utter ruin.

This fable is related in Ovid; (Metam. l. iii.) but there Juno is said to impose on Semele in the shape of an old woman, her nurse. It is hoped, the liberty taken in substituting Ino instead of the old woman will be excused: it was done, because Ino is interwoven in the design by her love of Athamas; to whom she was married, according to Ovid; and, because her character bears a proportion with the dignity of the other persons represented. This reason, it is presumed, may be allowed in a thing entirely fictitious; and more especially being represented under the title of an opera, where greater absurdities are every day excused.

It was not thought requisite to have any regard either to rhyme or equality of measure, in the lines of that part of the dialogue which was designed for the recitative style in music. For as that style in music is not confined to the strict observation of time and measure, which is required in the composition of airs and sonatas, so neither is it necessary that the same exactness in numbers, rhymes, or measure, should be observed in words designed to be set in that manner, which must ever be observed in the formation of odes and sonnets. For what they call recitative in music, is only a more tuneable speaking, it is a kind of prose in music; its beauty consists in coming near nature, and in improving the natural accents of words by more pathetic or emphatical tones.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JUPITER.
CADMUS, *King of Thebes.*
ATHAMAS, *a Prince of Bœotia, in love with and designed to marry* SEMELE.
SOMNUS.
APOLLO.
CUPID.
Zephyrs.
Loves.
Shepherds.
Satyrs.

JUNO.
IRIS.
SEMELE, *Daughter to* CADMUS, *beloved by and in love with* JUPITER.
INO, *Sister to* SEMELE, *in love with* ATHAMAS.
Shepherdesses.

Chief Priest *of* JUNO, *other* Priests *and* Augurs.

SCENE,—BŒOTIA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Temple of* JUNO: *near the altar is a golden image of the goddess.* Priests *are in their solemnities, as after a sacrifice newly offered: flames arise from the altar, and the statue of* JUNO *is seen to bow.*

CADMUS, ATHAMAS, SEMELE, INO, *and* Attendants.

1 *Priest.* Behold! auspicious flashes rise;
Juno accepts our sacrifice;
The grateful odour swift ascends,
And see, the golden image bends.
1 & 2 *Priest.* Lucky omens bless our rites,
And sure success shall crown your loves;
Peaceful days and fruitful nights
Attend the pair that she approves.
Cad. Daughter, obey,
Hear, and obey,
With kind consenting
Ease a parent's care;
Invent no new delay.
Ath. Oh, hear a faithful lover's prayer!
On this auspicious day
Invent no new delay.
Cad. Ath. Hear, and obey;
Invent no new delay
On this auspicious day.
Sem. [*Apart.*] Ah me!
What refuge now is left me?
How various, how tormenting,
Are my miseries!
O Jove, assist me!
Can Semele forego thy love,
And to a mortal's passion yield?
Thy vengeance will o'ertake
Such perfidy.
If I deny, my father's wrath I fear.
O Jove, in pity teach me which to choose,
Incline me to comply, or help me to refuse.
Ath. See, she blushing turns her eyes;
See, with sighs her bosom panting!
If from love those sighs arise,
Nothing to my bliss is wanting.
Hymen haste, thy torch prepare,
Love already his has lighted,
One soft sigh has cured despair,
And more than my past pains requited.
Ino. Alas! she yields,
And has undone me:
I can no longer hide my passion;
It must have vent—
Or inward burning
Will consume me.
O Athamas—
I cannot utter it—
Ath. On me fair Ino calls
With mournful accent,
Her colour fading,
And her eyes o'erflowing!
Ino. O Semele!
Sem. On me she calls,
Yet seems to shun me!
What would my sister?
Speak!
Ino. Thou hast undone me.
Cad. Why dost thou thus untimely grieve,
And all our solemn rites profane?
Can he, or she, thy woes relieve?
Or I? of whom dost thou complain?
Ino. Of all; but all, I fear, in vain.
Ath. Can I thy woes relieve?
Sem. Can I assuage thy pain?
Cad. Ath. Sem. Of whom dost thou complain?
Ino. Of all; but all, I fear, in vain.
[*It lightens, and thunder is heard at a distance; then a noise of rain; the fire is suddenly extinguished on the altar: the* Chief Priest *comes forward.*
1 *Priest.* Avert these omens, all ye powers!
Some god averse our holy rites controls;
O'erwhelm'd with sudden night, the day expires!
Ill-boding thunder on the right hand rolls,
And Jove himself descends in showers,
To quench our late propitious fires.

Chorus of Priests.

Avert these omens, all ye powers!
2 *Priest.* Again auspicious flashes rise,
Juno accepts our sacrifice.
[*Flames are again kindled on the altar, and the Statue nods.*
3 *Priest.* Again the sickly flame decaying dies:
Juno assents, but angry Jove denies.
[*The fire is again extinguished.*
Ath. [*Apart.*] Thy aid, pronubial Juno, Athamas implores.
Sem. [*Apart.*] Thee Jove, and thee alone, thy Semele adores.
[*A loud clap of thunder; the altar sinks.*
1 *Priest.* Cease, cease your vows, 'tis impious to proceed;
Begone, and fly this holy place with speed:
This dreadful conflict is of dire presage;
Begone, and fly from Jove's impending rage.
[*All but the* Priests *come forward. The scene closes on the* Priests, *and shows to view the front and outside of the Temple;* CADMUS *leads off* SEMELE, Attendants *follow.* ATHAMAS *and* INO *remain.*

SCENE II.

ATHAMAS *and* INO.

Ath. O Athamas, what torture hast thou borne!
And oh, what hast thou yet to bear!
From love, from hope, from near possession torn,
And plunged at once in deep despair.
Ino. Turn, hopeless lover, turn thy eyes,
And see a maid bemoan,
In flowing tears and aching sighs,
Thy woes too like her own.
Ath. She weeps!
The gentle maid, in tender pity,
Weeps to behold my misery!
So Semele would melt
To see another mourn.
Such unavailing mercy is in beauty found,
Each nymph bemoans the smart
Of every bleeding heart,
But that where she herself inflicts the wound.

Ino. Ah me, too much afflicted!
Ath. Can pity for another's pain
Cause such anxiety!
Ino. Couldst thou but guess
What I endure!
Or could I tell thee—
Thou, Athamas,
Wouldst for a while
Thy sorrows cease, a little cease,
And listen for a while
To my lamenting.
Ath. Of grief too sensible
I know your tender nature.
Well I remember,
When I oft have sued
To cold, disdainful Semele,
When I with scorn have been rejected,
Your tuneful voice my tale would tell,
In pity of my sad despair;
And with sweet melody, compel
Attention from the flying fair.
Ino. Too well I see
Thou wilt not understand me.
Whence could proceed such tenderness?
Whence such compassion?
Insensible! ingrate!
Ah no, I cannot blame thee:
For by effects unknown before,
Who could the hidden cause explore?
Or think that love could act so strange a part,
To plead for pity in a rival's heart?
Ath. Ah me, what have I heard!
She does her passion own.
Ino. What, had I not despaired,
You never should have known.
You've undone me;
Look not on me
Guilt upbraiding;
Shame invading;
Look not on me;
You've undone me!
Ath. With my life I would atone
Pains you've borne, to me unknown.
Cease, cease to shun me.
Ino. Look not on me,
You've undone me.
Ath. Cease, cease to shun me;
Love, love alone
Has both undone.
Ino, Ath. Love, love alone
Has both undone.

SCENE III.

ATHAMAS, INO, *and* CADMUS, *attended.*

Cad. Ah wretched prince, doom'd to disastrous love!
Ah me, of parents most forlorn!
Prepare, O Athamas, to prove
The sharpest pangs that e'er were borne:
Prepare with me our common loss to mourn.
Ath. Can fate, or Semele invent
Another, yet another punishment?
Cad. Wing'd with our fears, and pious haste,
From Juno's fane we fled;
Scarce we the brazen gates had pass'd,
When Semele around her head
With azure flames was graced,
Whose lambent glories in her tresses play'd.
While this we saw, with dread surprise,
Swifter than lightning downwards tending
An eagle stoop'd, of mighty size,
On purple wings descending;
Like gold his beak, like stars shone forth his eyes,
His silver plumy breast with snow contending:
Sudden he snatch'd the trembling maid,
And soaring from our sight convey'd;
Diffusing ever, as he lessening flew,
Celestial odour and ambrosial dew.
Ath. O prodigy, to me of dire portent!
Ino. To me, I hope, of fortunate event.

SCENE IV.

ATHAMAS, INO, CADMUS, *the* Chief-Priest, Augurs, *and other* Priests.

Cad. See, see Jove's priests, and holy augurs come:—
Speak, speak, of Semele and me declare the doom:
1 *Aug.* Hail, Cadmus, hail! Jove salutes the Theban king.
Cease your mourning,
Joys returning,
Songs of mirth and triumph sing.
2 *Aug.* Endless pleasure, endless love
Semele enjoys above.
On her bosom Jove reclining,
Useless now his thunder lies;
To her arms his bolts resigning,
And his lightning to her eyes.
Endless pleasure, endless love
Semele enjoys above.
1 *Priest.* Haste, haste, haste! to sacrifice prepare,
Once to the thunderer, once to the fair,
Jove and Semele implore:
Jove and Semele like honours share;
Whom gods admire, let men adore.
Haste, haste, haste! to sacrifice prepare.

Chorus of Priests *and* Augurs.

Hail, Cadmus, hail! Jove salutes the Theban king.
Cease your mourning,
Joys returning,
Songs of mirth and triumph sing. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A pleasant country; the prospect is terminated by a beautiful mountain, adorned with woods and waterfalls.* JUNO *and* IRIS *descend in different machines.* JUNO *in a chariot drawn by peacocks*; IRIS *on a rainbow*; *they alight and meet.*

Juno. Iris! impatient of thy stay,
From Samos have I wing'd my way,
To meet thy slow return;
Thou know'st what cares infest
My anxious breast,
And how with rage and jealousy I burn:
Then why this long delay?
Iris. With all his speed, not yet the sun
Through half his race has run,
Since I to execute thy dread command
Have thrice encompass'd seas and land.
Juno. Say, where is Semele's abode?
Till that I know,
Though thou hadst on lightning rode,
Still thou tedious art, and slow.
Iris. Look where Citheron proudly stands,
Bœotia parting from Cecropian lands:
High on the summit of that hill,
Beyond the reach of mortal eyes,
By Jove's command, and Vulcan's skill,
Behold a new-erected palace rise.

There from mortal cares retiring,
She resides in sweet retreat;
On her pleasure, Jove requiring,
All the Loves and Graces wait.

Thither Flora the fair
With her train must repair,
Her amorous Zephyr attending,
All her sweets she must bring
To continue the spring,
Which never must there know an ending.

Bright Aurora, 'tis said,
From her old lover's bed
No more the grey orient adorning,
For the future must rise
From fair Semele's eyes,
And wait till she wakes for the morning.

Juno. No more—I'll hear no more.
How long must I endure?—
How long must indignation burning,
From impious mortals
Bear this insolence!
Awake, Saturnia, from thy lethargy;
Seize, destroy the curst adultress.
Scale proud Citheron's top;!
Snatch her, tear her in thy fury,
And down, down to the flood of Acheron
Let her fall, let her fall, fall, fall!
Rolling down the depths of night,
Never more to behold the light.
If I am own'd above,
Sister and wife of Jove;
(Sister at least I sure may claim,
Though wife be a neglected name;)
If I the imperial sceptre sway—I swear
By hell—
Tremble, thou universe, this oath to hear,
Not one of curst Agenor's race to spare.
Iris. Hear, mighty queen, while I recount
What obstacles you must surmount.
With adamant the gates are barr'd,
Whose entrance two fierce dragons guard;
At each approach they lash their forky stings,
And clap their brazen wings:
And as their scaly horrors rise,
They all at once disclose
A thousand fiery eyes,
Which never know repose.
Juno. Hence, Iris, hence away,
Far from the realms of day!
O'er Scythian hills to the Mœotian lake
A speedy flight we'll take:
There Somnus I'll compel
His downy bed to leave and silent cell:
With noise and light I will his peace molest,
Nor shall he sink again to pleasing rest,
Till to my vow'd revenge he grants supplies,
And seals with sleep the wakeful dragons' eyes.
[*They ascend.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Palace of* SEMELE; *she is sleeping;* CUPID, *with* Loves *and* Zephyrs, *waiting.*

Cup. See, after the toils of an amorous fight,
Where weary and pleased, still panting she lies;
While yet in her mind she repeats the delight,
How sweet is the slumber that steals on her eyes!
Come Zephyrs, come, while Cupid sings,
Fan her with your silky wings;
New desire
I'll inspire,
And revive the dying flames;
Dance around her
While I wound her,
And with pleasure fill her dreams.

A Dance of Zephyrs, *after which* SEMELE *awakes, and rises.*

Sem. O Sleep, why dost thou leave me?
Why thy visionary joys remove?
O Sleep, again deceive me,
To my arms restore my wandering love.

SCENE III.

Two Loves *lead in* JUPITER. *While he meets and embraces* SEMELE, CUPID *sings.*

Cup. Sleep forsaking,
Seize him waking;
Love has sought him,
Back has brought him;

Mighty Jove though he be,
And though Love cannot see,
Yet by feeling about
He has found him out,
And has caught him.

Sem. Let me not another moment
Bear the pangs of absence.
Since you have form'd my soul for loving,
No more afflict me
With doubts and fears, and cruel jealousy.

Jup. Lay your doubts and fears aside,
And for joys alone provide;
Though this human form I wear,
Think not I man's falsehood bear.
You are mortal, and require
Time to rest and to respire.
Nor was I absent,
Though a while withdrawn,
To take petitions
From the needy world.
While love was with thee
I was present;
Love and I are one.

Sem. If cheerful hopes
And chilling fears,
Alternate smiles,
Alternate tears,
Eager panting,
Fond desiring,
With grief now fainting,
Now with bliss expiring;
If this be love, not you alone,
But love and I are one.

Jup. Sem. If this be love, not you alone,
But love and I are one.

Sem. Ah me!

Jup. Why sighs my Semele?
What gentle sorrow
Swells thy soft bosom?
Why tremble those fair eyes
With interrupted light?
Where hovering for a vent,
Amidst their humid fires,
Some new-form'd wish appears:
Speak, and obtain.

Sem. At my own happiness
I sigh and tremble;
Mortals whom gods affect
Have narrow limits set to life,
And cannot long be bless'd.
Or if they could—
A god may prove inconstant.

Jup. Beware of jealousy!
Had Juno not been jealous,
I ne'er had left Olympus,
Nor wander'd in my love.

Sem. With my frailty don't upbraid me,
I am woman as you made me,
Causeless doubting or despairing,
Rashly trusting, idly fearing.
If obtaining,
Still complaining;
If consenting,
Still repenting;
Most complying,
When denying,
And to be follow'd only flying.
With my frailty don't upbraid me,
I am woman as you made me.

Jup. Thy sex of Jove's the masterpiece,
Thou of thy sex art most excelling.
Frailty in thee is ornament,
In thee perfection.
Given to agitate the mind,
And keep awake men's passions;
To banish indolence,
And dull repose,
The foes of transport
And of pleasure.

Sem. Still I am mortal,
Still a woman;
And ever when you leave me,
Though compass'd round with deities
Of Loves and Graces,
A fear invades me;
And conscious of a nature
Far inferior,
I seek for solitude,
And shun society.

Jup. [*Apart*] Too well I read her meaning,
But must not understand her.
Aiming at immortality
With dangerous ambition,
She would dethrone Saturnia;
And reigning in my heart
Would reign in heaven.
Lest she too much explain,
I must with speed amuse her;
It gives the lover double pain,
Who hears his nymph complain,
And hearing must refuse her.

Sem. Why do you cease to gaze upon me?
Why musing turn away?
Some other object
Seems more pleasing.

Jup. Thy needless fears remove,
My fairest, latest, only love.
By my command,
Now at this instant,
Two wingèd Zephyrs
From her downy bed
Thy much-loved Ino bear;
And both together
Waft her hither
Through the balmy air.

Sem. Shall I my sister see!
The dear companion
Of my tender years.

Jup. See, she appears,
But sees not me;
For I am visible
Alone to thee.
While I retire, rise and meet her,
And with welcomes greet her.
Now all this scene shall to Arcadia turn,
The seat of happy nymphs and swains;
There without the rage of jealousy they burn,
And taste the sweets of love without its pains.

SCENE IV.

JUPITER *retires.* SEMELE *and* INO *meet and embrace. The Scene is totally changed, and shows an open country. Several* Shepherds *and* Shepherdesses *enter.* SEMELE *and* INO *having entertained each other in dumb show, sit and observe the rural sports, which end the second Act.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Cave of* SOMNUS. *The god of sleep lying on his bed. A soft symphony is heard. Then the music changes to a different movement.*

JUNO *and* IRIS.

Juno. Somnus, awake!
Raise thy reclining head.
Iris. Thyself forsake,
And lift up thy heavy lids of lead.
Som. [*Waking.*] Leave me, loathsome light!
Receive me, silent night.
Lethe, why does thy lingering current cease?
O murmur, murmur me again to peace.
[*Sinks down again.*
Iris. Dull god, canst thou attend the waters' fall,
And not hear Saturnia call!
Juno. Peace, Iris, peace! I know how to charm him:
Pasithea's name alone can warm him.
Juno, Iris. Only love on sleep has power;
O'er gods and men
Though Somnus reign,
Love alternate has his hour.
Juno. Somnus, arise,
Disclose thy tender eyes;
For Pasithea's sight
Endure the light:
Somnus, arise!
Som. [*Rising.*] More sweet is that name
Than a soft purling stream;
With pleasure repose I'll forsake,
If you'll grant me but her to soothe me [awake.
Juno. My will obey,
She shall be thine.
Thou with thy softer powers,
First Jove shalt captivate:
To Morpheus then give order,
Thy various minister,
That with a dream in shape of Semele,
But far more beautiful,
And more alluring,
He may invade the sleeping deity;
And more to agitate
His kindling fire,
Still let the phantom seem
To fly before him,
That he may wake impetuous,
Furious in desire;
Unable to refuse whatever boon
Her coyness shall require.
Som. I tremble to comply.
Juno. To me thy leaden rod resign,
To charm the sentinels
On mount Citheron;
Then cast a sleep on mortal Ino,
That I may seem her form to wear
When I to Semele appear.
Obey my will, thy rod resign,
And Pasithea shall be thine.
Som. All I must grant, for all is due
To Pasithea, love, and you.
Juno. Away let us haste.
Let neither have rest,
Till the sweetest of pleasures we prove;
Till of vengeance possess'd
I doubly am bless'd,
And thou art made happy in love.
[*Exeunt* JUNO *and* IRIS.
[SOMNUS *retires within his Cave, the scene changes to* SEMELE's *Apartment.*

SCENE II.

SEMELE.

I love, and am loved, yet more I desire;
Ah, how foolish a thing is fruition!
As one passion cools, some other takes fire,
And I'm still in a longing condition.
Whate'er I possess
Soon seems an excess,
For something untried I petition;
Though daily I prove
The pleasures of love,
I die for the joys of ambition.

SCENE III.

SEMELE, *and* JUNO *as* INO, *with a mirror in her hand.*

Juno. [*Apart.*] Thus, shaped like Ino,
With ease I shall deceive her,
And in this mirror she shall see
Herself as much transform'd as me.—
Do I some goddess see?
Or is it Semele?
Sem. Dear sister, speak,
Whence this astonishment?
Juno. Your charms improving
To divine perfection,
Show you were late admitted
Among celestial beauties.
Has Jove consented?
And are you made immortal?
Sem. Ah no, I still am mortal;
Nor am I sensible
Of any change or new perfection.
Juno. [*Giving her the glass.*] Behold in this mirror
Whence comes my surprise;
Such lustre and terror
Unite in your eyes,
That mine cannot fix on a radiance so bright;
'Tis unsafe for the sense, and too slippery for sight.
Sem. [*Looking in the glass.*] O ecstacy of happiness!
Celestial graces
I discover in each feature!
Myself I shall adore,
If I persist in gazing;
No object sure before
Was ever half so pleasing.
How did that glance become me!
But take this flattering mirror from me.
Yet once again let me view me:
Ah, charming all o'er!
[*Offering the glass, withdraws her hand again.*

Here—hold, I'll have one look more,
Though that look I were sure would undo me.
Juno. [*Taking the glass from her.*] Be wise as you are beautiful,
Nor lose this opportunity.
When Jove appears,
All ardent with desire,
Refuse his proffer'd flame
Till you obtain a boon without a name.
Sem. Can that avail me?
Juno. Unknowing your intent,
And eager for possessing,
He unawares will grant
The nameless blessing.
But bind him by the Stygian lake,
Lest lover-like his word he break.
Sem. But how shall I attain
To immortality?
Juno. Conjure him by his oath
Not to approach your bed
In likeness of a mortal,
But like himself the mighty thunderer,
In pomp of majesty,
And heavenly attire;
As when he proud Saturnia charms,
And with ineffable delights
Fills her encircling arms,
And pays the nuptial rites.
By this conjunction
With entire divinity
You shall partake of heavenly essence,
And thenceforth leave this mortal state
To reign above,
Adored by Jove,
In spite of jealous Juno's hate.
Sem. Thus let my thanks be paid,
Thus let my arms embrace thee;
And when I'm a goddess made,
With charms like mine I'll grace thee.
Juno. Rich odours fill the fragrant air,
And Jove's approach declare.
I must retire—
Sem. Adieu!—Your counsel I'll pursue.
Juno. [*Apart.*] And sure destruction will ensue.
Vain, wretched fool!—[*To* SEMELE] Adieu!

SCENE IV.

JUPITER enters, offers to embrace SEMELE; she looks kindly on him, but retires a little from him.

Jup. Come to my arms, my lovely fair,
Soothe my uneasy care;
In my dream late I woo'd thee,
And in vain I pursued thee,
For you fled from my prayer,
And bid me despair.
Come to my arms, my lovely fair.
Sem. Though 'tis easy to please ye,
And hard to deny;
Though possessing's a blessing
For which I could die,
I dare not, I cannot comply.
Jup. When I languish with anguish,
And tenderly sigh,
Can you leave me, deceive me,
And scornfully fly?
Ah, fear not; you must not deny.
Sem. Jup. I dare not, I cannot comply.
Ah, fear not; you must not deny.
Jup. O Semele,
Why art thou thus insensible?
Were I a mortal,
Thy barbarous disdaining
Would surely end me,
And death at my complaining
In pity would befriend me.
Sem. I ever am granting,
You always complain;
I always am wanting,
Yet never obtain.
Jup. Speak, speak your desire,
I'm all over fire.
Say what you require,
I'll grant it—now let us retire.
Sem. Swear by the Stygian lake.
Jup. By that tremendous flood I swear:
Ye Stygian waters, hear,
And thou Olympus, shake,
In witness to the oath I take.
[*Thunder heard at a distance, and underneath.*
Sem. You'll grant what I require?
Jup. I'll grant what you require.
Sem. Then cast off this human shape which you wear,
And Jove since you are, like Jove too appear;
When next you desire I should charm ye.
As when Juno you bless,
So you me must caress,
And with all your omnipotence arm ye.
Jup. Ah! take heed what you press,
For beyond all redress,
Should I grant what you wish, I shall harm ye.
Sem. I'll be pleased with no less
Than my wish in excess:
Let the oath you have taken alarm ye:
Haste, haste, and prepare,
For I'll know what you are;
So with all your omnipotence arm ye.

SCENE V.

She withdraws, JUPITER remains pensive and dejected.

JUPITER.

Ah! whither is she gone? unhappy fair!
Why did she wish?—Why did I rashly swear?
'Tis past, 'tis past recall,
She must a victim fall.
Anon, when I appear,
The mighty thunderer,
Arm'd with inevitable fire,
She needs must instantly expire.
'Tis past, 'tis past recall,
She must a victim fall.
My softest lightning yet I'll try,
And mildest melting bolt apply:
In vain—for she was framed to prove
None but the lambent flames of love.
'Tis past, 'tis past recall,
She must a victim fall.

SCENE VI.

Juno appears in her chariot ascending.

JUNO.

Above measure
Is the pleasure
Which my revenge supplies.
Love's a bubble,
Gain'd with trouble,
And in possession dies.
With what joy shall I mount to my heaven again,
At once from my rival and jealousy freed!
The sweets of revenge make it worth while to reign,
And heaven will hereafter be heaven indeed.

[*She ascends.*

SCENE VII.

The Scene opening discovers SEMELE *lying under a canopy, leaning pensively. While a mournful symphony is playing, she looks up and sees* JUPITER *descending in a black cloud; the motion of the cloud is slow. Flashes of lightning issue from either side, and thunder is heard grumbling in the air.*

SEMELE.

Ah me! too late I now repent
My pride and impious vanity.
He comes! far off his lightnings scorch me.—
I feel my life consuming:
I burn, I burn!—I faint!—for pity I implore—
O help! O help!—I can no more. [*Dies.*

[*As the cloud which contains* JUPITER *is arrived just over the canopy of* SEMELE, *a sudden and great flash of lightning breaks forth, and a clap of loud thunder is heard; when at one instant* SEMELE, *with the palace and the whole present scene disappears, and* JUPITER *reascends swiftly. The scene, totally changed, represents a pleasant country, Mount Citheron closing the prospect.*

SCENE VIII.

CADMUS, ATHAMAS, *and* INO.

Ino. Of my ill-boding dream
Behold the dire event.
Cad. Ath. O terror and astonishment!
Ino. How I was hence removed,
Or hither how return'd, I know not:
So long a trance withheld me.
But Hermes in a vision told me
(As I have now related)
The fate of Semele;
And added, as from me he fled,
That Jove ordain'd I Athamas should wed.
Cad. Be Jove in everything obey'd.

[*Joins their hands.*

Ath. Unworthy of your charms, myself I yield;
Be Jove's commands and yours fulfill'd.
Cad. See, from above the bellying clouds descend,
And big with some new wonder this way tend.

SCENE IX.

A bright cloud descends and rests on Mount Citheron, which opening, discovers APOLLO *seated in it as the god of prophecy.*

CADMUS, ATHAMAS, INO, *and* APOLLO.

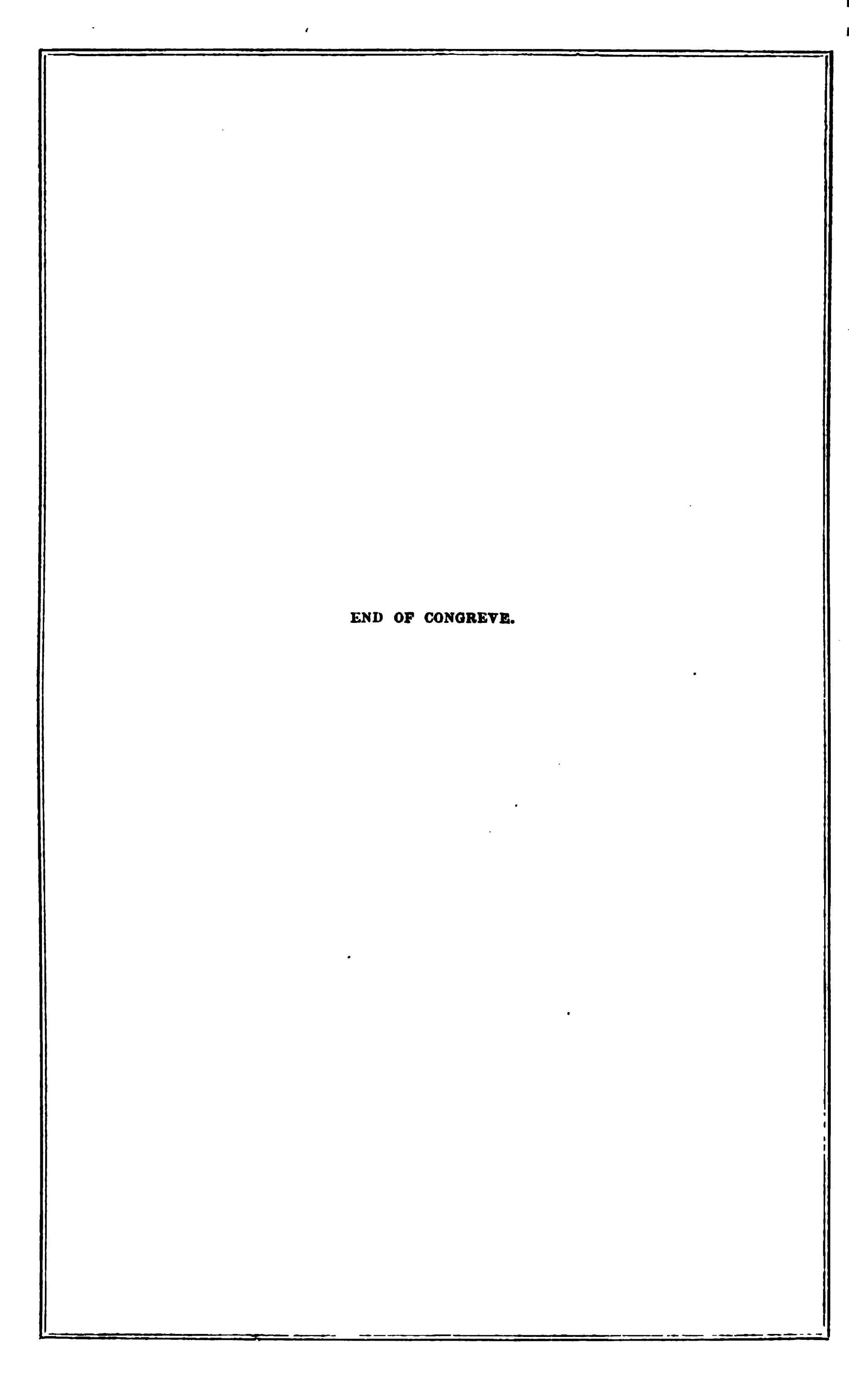
Apol. Apollo comes to relieve your care,
And future happiness declare.
From tyrannous love all your sorrows proceed,
From tyrannous love you shall quickly be freed.
From Semele's ashes a phœnix shall rise,
The joy of this earth, and delight of the skies:
A god he shall prove
More mighty than Love;
And a sovereign juice shall invent,
Which antidote pure
The sick lover shall cure,
And sighing and sorrow for ever prevent.
Then mortals be merry, and scorn the blind boy;
Your hearts from his arrows strong wine shall defend:
Each day and each night you shall revel in joy,
For when Bacchus is born, Love's reign 's at an end.

Chorus.

Then mortals be merry, &c.

Dance of Satyrs.

[*Exeunt omnes.*



END OF CONGREVE.

THE

DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

SIR JOHN VANBRUGH.

THE RELAPSE; OR, VIRTUE IN DANGER.

A Comedy.

BEING THE SEQUEL OF "THE FOOL IN FASHION."

THE PREFACE.

To go about to excuse half the defects this abortive brat is come into the world with, would be to provoke the town with a long useless preface, when 'tis, I doubt, sufficiently soured already by a tedious play.

I do therefore (with all the humility of a repenting sinner) confess, it wants everything—but length; and in that, I hope, the severest critic will be pleased to acknowledge I have not been wanting. But my modesty will sure atone for everything, when the world shall know it is so great, I am even to this day insensible of those two shining graces in the play (which some part of the town is pleased to compliment me with)—blasphemy and bawdy.

For my part, I cannot find them out. If there were any obscene expressions upon the stage, here they are in the print; for I have dealt fairly, I have not sunk a syllable that could (though by racking of mysteries) be ranged under that head; and yet I believe with a steady faith, there is not one woman of a real reputation in town, but when she has read it impartially over in her closet, will find it so innocent, she'll think it no affront to her prayer-book, to lay it upon the same shelf. So to them (with all manner of deference) I entirely refer my cause; and I'm confident they'll justify me against those pretenders to good manners, who, at the same time, have so little respect for the ladies, they would extract a bawdy jest from an ejaculation, to put 'em out of countenance. But I expect to have these well-bred persons always my enemies, since I'm sure I shall never write anything lewd enough to make 'em my friends.

As for the saints (your thorough-paced ones, I mean, with screwed faces and wry mouths) I despair of them, for they are friends to nobody. They love nothing but their altars and themselves. They have too much zeal to have any charity; they make debauches in piety, as sinners do in wine; and are as quarrelsome in their religion, as other people are in their drink: so I hope nobody will mind what they say. But if any man (with flat plod shoes, a little band, greasy hair, and a dirty face, who is wiser than I, at the expense of being forty years older) happens to be offended at a story of a cock and a bull, and a priest and a bull-dog, I beg his pardon with all my heart; which, I hope, I shall obtain, by eating my words, and making this public recantation. I do therefore, for his satisfaction, acknowledge I lied, when I said, they never quit their hold; for in that little time I have lived in the world, I thank God I have seen 'em forced to it more than once: but next time I'll speak with more caution and truth, and only say, they have very good teeth.

If I have offended any honest gentlemen of the town, whose friendship or good word is worth the having, I am very sorry for it; I hope they'll correct me as gently as they can, when they consider I have had no other design, in running a very great risk, than to divert (if possible) some part of their spleen, in spite of their wives and their taxes.

One word more about the bawdy, and I have done. I own the first night this thing was acted, some indecencies had like to have happened, but 'twas not my fault.

The fine gentleman of the play, drinking his mistress's health in Nantes brandy, from six in the morning to the time he waddled on upon the stage in the evening, had toasted himself up to such a pitch of vigour, I confess I once gave Amanda for gone, and am since (with all due respect to Mrs. Rogers) very sorry she scaped; for I am confident a certain lady (let no one take it to herself that's handsome) who highly blames the play, for the barrenness of the conclusion, would then have allowed it a very natural close.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SIR NOVELTY FASHION, *newly created* LORD FOPPINGTON.
TOM FASHION, *his Brother.*
LOVELESS, *Husband to* AMANDA.
WORTHY, *a Gentleman of the Town.*
SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSEY, *a Country Gentleman.*
SIR JOHN FRIENDLY, *his Neighbour.*
COUPLER, *a Match-maker.*
BULL, *Chaplain to* SIR TUNBELLY.
SYRINGE, *a Surgeon.*
LORY, *Servant to* TOM FASHION.
LA VEROLE, *Valet to* LORD FOPPINGTON.
MENDLEGS, *a Hosier.*
FORETOP, *a Periwig-maker.*
TUG, *a Waterman.*

AMANDA, *Wife to* LOVELESS.
BERINTHIA, *her Cousin, a young Widow.*
MISS HOYDEN, *a great Fortune, Daughter to* SIR TUNBELLY.
NURSE, *her Governante.*
MRS. CALICO, *a Sempstress.*
ABIGAIL, *Maid to* BERINTHIA.

Shoemaker, Tailor, Constable, Clerk, Porter, Page, Musicians, Dancers, &c.

SCENE,—SOMETIMES IN LONDON, SOMETIMES IN THE COUNTRY.

FIRST PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MISS CROSS.

Ladies, this Play in too much haste was writ,
To be o'ercharged with either plot or wit;
'Twas got, conceived, and born in six weeks' space,
And wit, you know, 's as slow in growth as—grace.
Sure it can ne'er be ripen'd to your taste;
I doubt 'twill prove, our author bred too fast:
For mark 'em well, who with the Muses marry,
They rarely do conceive, but they miscarry.
'Tis the hard fate of those who are big with rhyme,
Still to be brought to bed before their time.
Of our late poets Nature few has made;
The greatest part are—only so by trade.
Still want of something brings the scribbling fit;
For want of money some of 'em have writ,
And others do't, you see, for—want of wit.
Honour, they fancy, summons 'em to write,
So out they lug in wresty Nature's spite,
As some of you spruce beaux do—when you fight.
Yet let the ebb of wit be ne'er so low,
Some glimpse of it a man may hope to show,
Upon a theme so ample as—a beau.
So, howsoe'er true courage may decay,
Perhaps there's not one smock-face here to-day,
But's bold as Cæsar—to attack a play.
Nay, what's yet more, with an undaunted face,
To do the thing with more heroic grace,
'Tis six to four ye attack the strongest place.
You are such Hotspurs in this kind of venture,
Where there's no breach, just there you needs must enter:
But be advised—
E'en give the hero and the critic o'er,
For Nature sent you on another score;—
She form'd her beau, for nothing but her whore.

PROLOGUE ON THE THIRD DAY.

SPOKEN BY MRS. VERBRUGGEN.

Apologies for Plays, experience shows,
Are things almost as useless as—the beaux.
Whate'er we say (like them) we neither move
Your friendship, pity, anger, nor your love.
'Tis interest turns the globe; let us but find
The way to please you, and you'll soon be kind:
But to expect, you'd for our sakes approve,
Is just as though you for their sakes should love;
And that, we do confess, we think a task
Which (though they may impose) we never ought to ask.
This is an age, where all things we improve,
But, most of all, the art of making love.
In former days, women were only won
By merit, truth, and constant service done;
But lovers now are much more expert grown;
They seldom wait, to approach by tedious form;
They're for despatch, for taking you by storm:
Quick are their sieges, furious are their fires,
Fierce their attacks, and boundless their desires.
Before the Play's half ended, I'll engage
To show you beaux come crowding on the stage,
Who with so little pains have always sped,
They'll undertake to look a lady dead.
How have I shook, and trembling stood with awe,
When here, behind the scenes, I've seen 'em draw
—A comb; that dead-doing weapon to the heart,
And turn each powder'd hair into a dart!
When I have seen 'em sally on the stage,
Dress'd to the war, and ready to engage,
I've mourn'd your destiny—yet more their fate,
To think, that after victories so great,
It should so often prove their hard mishap
To sneak into a lane, and get—a clap.
But, hush! they're here already; I'll retire,
And leave 'em to the ladies to admire.
They'll show you twenty thousand arts and graces,
They'll entertain you with their soft grimaces,
Their snuffbox, awkward bows, and—ugly faces.
In short, they're after all so much your friends,
That lest the Play should fail, the author ends;
They have resolved to make you some amends.
Between each act (perform'd by nicest rules)
They'll treat you with—an Interlude of fools:
Of which that you may have the deeper sense,
The entertainment's—at their own expense.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Loveless's *Country-House.*

Enter Loveless, *reading.*

Love. How true is that philosophy, which says
Our heaven is seated in our minds!
Through all the roving pleasures of my youth,
(Where nights and days seem all consumed in joy,
Where the false face of luxury
Display'd such charms,
As might have shaken the most holy hermit,
And made him totter at his altar,)
I never knew one moment's peace like this.
Here, in this little soft retreat,
My thoughts unbent from all the cares of life,
Content with fortune,
Eased from the grating duties of dependence,
From envy free, ambition under foot,
The raging flame of wild destructive lust
Reduced to a warm pleasing fire of lawful love,
My life glides on, and all is well within.

Enter AMANDA.

How does the happy cause of my content, [*Meeting her kindly.*
My dear Amanda?
You find me musing on my happy state,
And full of grateful thoughts to Heaven, and you.
Aman. Those grateful offerings Heaven can't receive
With more delight than I do:
Would I could share with it as well
The dispensations of its bliss!
That I might search its choicest favours out,
And shower 'em on your head for ever.
Love. The largest boons that Heaven thinks fit to grant,
To things it has decreed shall crawl on earth,
Are in the gift of woman form'd like you.
Perhaps when time shall be no more,
When the aspiring soul shall take its flight,
And drop this ponderous lump of clay behind it,
It may have appetites we know not of,
And pleasures as refined as its desires—
But till that day of knowledge shall instruct me,
The utmost blessing that my thought can reach, [*Taking her in his arms.*
Is folded in my arms, and rooted in my heart.
Aman. There let it grow for ever!
Love. Well said, Amanda—let it be for ever—
Would Heaven grant that—
Aman. 'Twere all the heaven I'd ask.
But we are clad in black mortality,
And the dark curtain of eternal night
At last must drop between us.
Love. It must.
That mournful separation we must see,
A bitter pill it is to all; but doubles its ungrateful taste,
When lovers are to swallow it.
Aman. Perhaps that pain may only be my lot,
You possibly may be exempted from it.
Men find out softer ways to quench their fires.
Love. Can you then doubt my constancy, Amanda?
You'll find 'tis built upon a steady basis—
The rock of reason now supports my love,
On which it stands so fix'd,
The rudest hurricane of wild desire
Would, like the breath of a soft slumbering babe,
Pass by, and never shake it.
Aman. Yet still 'tis safer to avoid the storm;
The strongest vessels, if they put to sea,
May possibly be lost.
Would I could keep you here in this calm port for ever!
Forgive the weakness of a woman,
I am uneasy at your going to stay so long in town;
I know its false insinuating pleasures;
I know the force of its delusions;
I know the strength of its attacks;
I know the weak defence of nature;
I know you are a man—and I—a wife.
Love. You know then all that needs to give you rest,
For wife's the strongest claim that you can urge.
When you would plead your title to my heart,
On this you may depend. Therefore be calm,
Banish your fears, for they
Are traitors to your peace: beware of them,
They are insinuating busy things
That gossip to and fro,
And do a world of mischief where they come.
But you shall soon be mistress of 'em all;
I'll aid you with such arms for their destruction,
They never shall erect their heads again.
You know the business is indispensable, that obliges me to go for London; and you have no reason, that I know of, to believe that I'm glad of the occasion. For my honest conscience is my witness,
I have found a due succession of such charms
In my retirement here with you,
I have never thrown one roving thought that way.
But since, against my will, I'm dragg'd once more
To that uneasy theatre of noise,
I am resolved to make such use on't,
As shall convince you 'tis an old cast mistress,
Who has been so lavish of her favours,
She's now grown bankrupt of her charms,
And has not one allurement left to move me.
Aman. Her bow, I do believe, is grown so weak
Her arrows (at this distance) cannot hurt you;
But in approaching 'em, you give 'em strength.
The dart that has not far to fly, will put
The best of armour to a dangerous trial.
Love. That trial past, and you're at ease for ever;
When you have seen the helmet proved,
You'll apprehend no more for him that wears it.
Therefore, to put a lasting period to your fears,
I am resolved, this once, to launch into temptation:
I'll give you an essay of all my virtues,
My former boon companions of the bottle
Shall fairly try what charms are left in wine:
I'll take my place amongst them,
They shall hem me in,
Sing praises to their god, and drink his glory:
Turn wild enthusiasts for his sake,
And beasts to do him honour:
Whilst I, a stubborn atheist,
Sullenly look on,
Without one reverend glass to his divinity.
That for my temperance,
Then for my constancy—
Aman. Ay, there take heed.
Love. Indeed the danger's small.
Aman. And yet my fears are great.
Love. Why are you so timorous?
Aman. Because you are so bold.
Love. My courage should disperse your apprehension.
Aman. My apprehensions should alarm your courage.
Love. Fy, fy, Amanda! it is not kind thus to distrust me.
Aman. And yet my fears are founded on my love.
Love. Your love then is not founded as it ought;
For if you can believe 'tis possible
I should again relapse to my past follies,
I must appear to you a thing
Of such an undigested composition,
That but to think of me with inclination,
Would be a weakness in your taste
Your virtue scarce could answer.
Aman. 'Twould be a weakness in my tongue;
My prudence could not answer,
If I should press you farther with my fears;
I'll therefore trouble you no longer with 'em.
Love. Nor shall they trouble you much longer,
A little time shall show you they were groundless:
This winter shall be the fiery trial of my virtue;

Which, when it once has pass'd,
You'll be convinced 'twas of no false allay,
There all your cares will end.
Aman. Pray Heaven they may.
[*Exeunt, hand in hand.*

SCENE II.—*Whitehall.*

Enter TOM FASHION, LORY, *and* TUG.

Fash. Come, pay the waterman, and take the portmantle.

Lory. Faith, sir, I think the waterman had as good take the portmantle, and pay himself.

Fash. Why, sure there's something left in't!

Lory. But a solitary old waistcoat, upon my honour, sir.

Fash. Why, what's become of the blue coat, sirrah?

Lory. Sir, 'twas eaten at Gravesend; the reckoning came to thirty shillings, and your privy purse was worth but two half-crowns.

Fash. 'Tis very well.

Tug. Pray, master, will you please to despatch me?

Fash. Ay, here a—canst thou change me a guinea?

Lory. [*Aside.*] Good!

Tug. Change a guinea, master! Ha! ha! your honour's pleased to compliment.

Fash. Egad, I don't know how I shall pay thee then, for I have nothing but gold about me.

Lory. [*Aside.*] Hum, hum!

Fash. What dost thou expect, friend?

Tug. Why, master, so far against wind and tide is richly worth half a piece.

Fash. Why, faith, I think thou art a good conscionable fellow. Egad, I begin to have so good an opinion of thy honesty, I care not if I leave my portmantle with thee, till I send thee thy money.

Tug. Ha! God bless your honour; I should be as willing to trust you, master, but that you are, as a man may say, a stranger to me, and these are nimble times; there are a great many sharpers stirring.—[*Taking up the portmantle.*] Well, master, when your worship sends the money, your portmantle shall be forthcoming; my name's Tug, my wife keeps a brandy-shop in Drab-Alley, at Wapping.

Fash. Very well; I'll send for't to-morrow.
[*Exit* TUG.

Lory. So.—Now, sir, I hope you'll own yourself a happy man, you have outlived all your cares.

Fash. How so, sir?

Lory. Why you have nothing left to take care of.

Fash. Yes, sirrah, I have myself and you to take care of still.

Lory. Sir, if you could but prevail with somebody else to do that for you, I fancy we might both fare the better for't.

Fash. Why, if thou canst tell me where to apply myself, I have at present so little money, and so much humility about me, I don't know but I may follow a fool's advice.

Lory. Why then, sir, your fool advises you to lay aside all animosity, and apply to sir Novelty, your elder brother.

Fash. Damn my elder brother!

Lory. With all my heart; but get him to redeem your annuity however.

Fash. My annuity! 'Sdeath, he's such a dog, he would not give his powder-puff to redeem my soul.

Lory. Look you, sir, you must wheedle him, or you must starve.

Fash. Look you, sir, I will neither wheedle him, nor starve.

Lory. Why, what will you do then?

Fash. I'll go into the army.

Lory. You can't take the oaths; you are a Jacobite.

Fash. Thou mayst as well say I can't take orders because I'm an atheist.

Lory. Sir, I ask your pardon; I find I did not know the strength of your conscience so well as I did the weakness of your purse.

Fash. Methinks, sir, a person of your experience should have known that the strength of the conscience proceeds from the weakness of the purse.

Lory. Sir, I am very glad to find you have a conscience able to take care of us, let it proceed from what it will; but I desire you'll please to consider, that the army alone will be but a scanty maintenance for a person of your generosity (at least as rents now are paid). I shall see you stand in damnable need of some auxiliary guineas for your *menus plaisirs;* I will therefore turn fool once more for your service, and advise you to go directly to your brother.

Fash. Art thou then so impregnable a blockhead, to believe he'll help me with a farthing?

Lory. Not if you treat him *de haut en bas*, as you use to do.

Fash. Why, how wouldst have me treat him?

Lory. Like a trout—tickle him.

Fash. I can't flatter.

Lory. Can you starve?

Fash. Yes.

Lory. I can't.—Good-by t'ye, sir— [*Going.*

Fash. Stay; thou wilt distract me! What wouldst thou have me say to him?

Lory. Say nothing to him, apply yourself to his favourites, speak to his periwig, his cravat, his feather, his snuff box, and when you are well with them, desire him to lend you a thousand pounds. I'll engage you prosper.

Fash. 'Sdeath and furies! why was that coxcomb thrust into the world before me? O Fortune! Fortune!—thou art a bitch by Gad! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* LORD FOPPINGTON'S *House.*

Enter LORD FOPPINGTON *in his nightgown.*

Lord Fop. Page!

Enter Page.

Page. Sir!

Lord Fop. Sir!—Pray, sir, do me the favour to teach your tongue the title the king has thought fit to honour me with.

Page. I ask your lordship's pardon, my lord.

Lord Fop. O, you can pronounce the word then? I thought it would have choked you.—D'ye hear?

Page. My lord!

Lord Fop. Call La Verole; I would dress.—[*Exit* Page.]—Well, 'tis an unspeakable pleasure to be a man of quality, strike me dumb!—My lord,

—your lordship! My lord Foppington!—Ah! *c'est quelque chose de beau, que le diable m'emporte!*—Why the ladies were ready to puke at me whilst I had nothing but sir Navelty to recommend me to 'em.—Sure, whilst I was but a knight, I was a very nauseous fellow.—Well, 'tis ten thousand pawnd well given, stap my vitals!—

Enter LA VEROLE.

La Ver. Me lord, de shoemaker, de tailor, de hosier, de semstress, de barber, be all ready, if your lordship please to dress.

Lord Fop. 'Tis well, admit 'em.

La Ver. Hey, messieurs, entrez.

Enter Tailor, Shoemaker, MENDLEGS, FORETOP, *and* MRS. CALICO.

Lord Fop. So, gentlemen, I hope you have all taken pains to show yourselves masters in your professions.

Tailor. I think I may presume to say, sir—

La Ver. My lord—you clawn, you!

Tailor. Why, is he made a lord?—My lord, I ask your lordship's pardon, my lord; I hope, my lord, your lordship will please to own I have brought your lordship as accomplished a suit of clothes as ever peer of England trod the stage in, my lord. Will your lordship please to try 'em now?

Lord Fop. Ay; but let my people dispose the glasses so that I may see myself before and behind, for I love to see myself all raund.

Whilst he puts on his clothes, TOM FASHION *and* LORY *enter and converse apart.*

Fash. Heyday, what the devil have we here? Sure my gentleman's grown a favourite at court, he has got so many people at his levee.

Lory. Sir, these people come in order to make him a favourite at court; they are to establish him with the ladies.

Fash. Good God! to what an ebb of taste are women fallen, that it should be in the power of a laced coat to recommend a gallant to 'em!

Lory. Sir, tailors and periwig-makers are now become the bawds of the nation; 'tis they debauch all the women.

Fash. Thou sayest true; for there's that fop now has not by nature wherewithal to move a cook-maid, and by that time these fellows have done with him, egad he shall melt down a countess!—But now for my reception; I'll engage it shall be as cold a one as a courtier's to his friend, who comes to put him in mind of his promise.

Lord Fop. [*To his* Tailor.] Death and eternal tartures!—Sir, I say the packet's too high by a foot.

Tailor. My lord, if it had been an inch lower, it would not have held your lordship's pocket-handkerchief.

Lord Fop. Rat my pocket-handkerchief! have not I a page to carry it? You may make him a packet up to his chin a purpose for it; but I will not have mine come so near my face.

Tailor. 'Tis not for me to dispute your lordship's fancy.

Fash. [*To* LORY.] His lordship! Lory, did you observe that?

Lory. Yes, sir; I always thought 'twould end there. Now, I hope, you'll have a little more respect for him.

Fash. Respect!—Damn him for a coxcomb! now has he ruined his estate to buy a title, that he may be a fool of the first rate:—but let's accost him.—[*To* LORD FOPPINGTON.] Brother, I'm your humble servant.

Lord Fop. O Lard, Tam! I did not expect you in England.—Brother, I am glad to see you.—[*Turning to his* Tailor] Look you, sir; I shall never be reconciled to this nauseous packet; therefore pray get me another suit, with all manner of expedition, for this is my eternal aversion.—Mrs. Calico, are not you of my mind?

Mrs. Cal. O, directly, my lord! it can never be too low.

Lord Fop. You are passitively in the right on't, for the packet becomes no part of the body but the knee. [*Exit* Tailor.

Mrs. Cal. I hope your lordship is pleased with your steenkirk.

Lord Fop. In love with it, stap my vitals!—Bring your bill, you shall be paid to-marrow.

Mrs. Cal. I humbly thank your honour. [*Exit.*

Lord Fop. Hark thee, shoemaker! these shoes an't ugly, but they don't fit me.

Shoemaker. My lord, my thinks they fit you very well.

Lord Fop. They hurt me just below the instep.

Shoe. [*Feeling his foot.*] My lord, they don't hurt you there.

Lord Fop. I tell thee, they pinch me execrably.

Shoe. My lord, if they pinch you, I'll be bound to be hanged, that's all.

Lord Fop. Why, wilt thou undertake to persuade me I cannot feel?

Shoe. Your lordship may please to feel what you think fit; but that shoe does not hurt you—I think I understand my trade.

Lord Fop. Now by all that's great and powerful, thou art an incomprehensible coxcomb! but thou makest good shoes, and so I'll bear with thee.

Shoe. My lord, I have worked for half the people of quality in town these twenty years; and 'twere very hard I should not know when a shoe hurts, and when it don't.

Lord Fop. Well, prithee be gone about thy business.—[*Exit* Shoemaker.] Mr. Mendlegs, a word with you: the calves of these stockings are thickened a little too much. They make my legs look like a chairman's—

Mend. My lord, my thinks they look mighty well.

Lord Fop. Ay, but you are not so good a judge of those things as I am, I have studied 'em all my life; therefore pray let the next be the thickness of a crawn-piece less.—[*Aside.*] If the town takes notice my legs are fallen away, 'twill be attributed to the violence of some new intrigue.—[*Exit* MENDLEGS.] Come, Mr. Foretop, let me see what you have done, and then the fatigue of the morning will be over.

Fore. My lord, I have done what I defy any prince in Europe to outdo; I have made you a periwig so long, and so full of hair, it will serve you for a hat and cloak in all weathers.

Lord Fop. Then thou hast made me thy friend to eternity. Come, comb it out.

Fash. [*Aside to* LORY.] Well, Lory, what dost think on't? A very friendly reception from a brother after three years' absence!

Lory. Why, sir, 'tis your own fault; we seldom care for those that don't love what we love: if you would creep into his heart, you must enter

into his pleasures.—Here you have stood ever since you came in, and have not commended any one thing that belongs to him.

Fash. Nor never shall, while they belong to a coxcomb.

Lory. Then, sir, you must be content to pick a hungry bone.

Fash. No, sir, I'll crack it, and get to the marrow before I have done.

Lord Fop. Gad's curse, Mr. Foretop! you don't intend to put this upon me for a full periwig?

Fore. Not a full one, my lord? I don't know what your lordship may please to call a full one, but I have crammed twenty ounces of hair into it.

Lord Fop. What it may be by weight, sir, I shall not dispute; but by tale, there are not nine hairs of a side.

Fore. O lord! O lord! O lord! Why, as Gad shall judge me, your honour's side-face is reduced to the tip of your nose!

Lord Fop. My side-face may be in an eclipse for aught I know; but I'm sure my full-face is like the full-moon.

Fore. Heaven bless my eye-sight—[*Rubbing his eyes.*] Sure I look through the wrong end of the perspective; for by my faith, an't please your honour, the broadest place I see in your face does not seem to me to be two inches diameter.

Lord Fop. If it did it would just be two inches too broad; for a periwig to a man should be like a mask to a woman, nothing should be seen but his eyes.

Fore. My lord, I have done; if you please to have more hair in your wig, I'll put it in.

Lord Fop. Passitively, yes.

Fore. Shall I take it back now, my lord?

Lord Fop. No: I'll wear it to-day, though it show such a manstrous pair of cheeks, stap my vitals, I shall be taken for a trumpeter! [*Exit* FORETOP.

Fash. Now your people of business are gone, brother, I hope I may obtain a quarter of an hour's audience of you.

Lord Fop. Faith, Tam, I must beg you'll excuse me at this time, for I must away to the House of Lards immediately; my lady Teaser's case is to come on to-day, and I would not be absent for the salvation of mankind.—Hey, page!

Enter Page.

Is the coach at the door?

Page. Yes, my lord.

Lord Fop. You'll excuse me, brother. [*Going.*

Fash. Shall you be back at dinner?

Lord Fop. As Gad shall jidge me, I can't tell; for 'tis passible I may dine with some of aur House at Lacket's.

Fash. Shall I meet you there? For I must needs talk with you.

Lord Fop. That I'm afraid mayn't be so praper; far the lards I commonly eat with, are people of a nice conversation; and you know, Tam, your education has been a little at large: but, if you'll stay here, you'll find a family dinner.—[*To* Page.] Hey, fellow! What is there for dinner? There's beef: I suppose my brother will eat beef.—Dear Tam, I'm glad to see thee in England, stap my vitals! [*Exit with* LA VEROLE *and* Page.

Fash. Hell and furies! is this to be borne?

Lory. Faith, sir, I could almost have given him a knock o'th' pate myself.

Fash. 'Tis enough; I will now show thee the excess of my passion by being very calm. Come, Lory, lay your loggerhead to mine, and in cool blood let us contrive his destruction.

Lory. Here comes a head, sir, would contrive it better than us both, if he would but join in the confederacy.

Enter COUPLER.

Fash. By this light, old Coupler alive still!—Why, how now, matchmaker, art thou here still to plague the world with matrimony? You old bawd, how have you the impudence to be hobbling out of your grave twenty years after you are rotten!

Coup. When you begin to rot, sirrah, you'll go off like a pippin; one winter will send you to the devil. What mischief brings you home again? Ha! you young lascivious rogue you. Let me put my hand into your bosom, sirrah.

Fash. Stand off, old Sodom!

Coup. Nay, prithee now, don't be so coy.

Fash. Keep your hands to yourself, you old dog you, or I'll wring your nose off.

Coup. Hast thou then been a year in Italy, and brought home a fool at last? By my conscience, the young fellows of this age profit no more by their going abroad than they do by their going to church. Sirrah, sirrah, if you are not hanged before you come to my years,—you'll know a cock from a hen. But, come, I'm still a friend to thy person, though I have a contempt of thy understanding; and therefore I would willingly know thy condition, that I may see whether thou standest in need of my assistance: for widows swarm, my boy, the town's infected with 'em.

Fash. I stand in need of anybody's assistance, that will help me to cut my elder brother's throat, without the risk of being hanged for him.

Coup. Egad, sirrah, I could help thee to do him almost as good a turn, without the danger of being burned in the hand for't.

Fash. Sayest thou so, old Satan? Show me but that, and my soul is thine.

Coup. Pox o'thy soul! give me thy warm body, sirrah; I shall have a substantial title to't when I tell thee my project.

Fash. Out with it then, dear dad, and take possession as soon as thou wilt.

Coup. Sayest thou so, my Hephestion? Why, then, thus lies the scene—But hold; who's that? if we are heard we are undone.

Fash. What, have you forgot, Lory?

Coup. Who, trusty Lory, is it thee?

Lory. At your service, sir.

Coup. Give me thy hand, old boy. Egad, I did not know thee again; but I remember thy honesty though I did not thy face; I think thou hadst like to have been hanged once or twice for thy master.

Lory. Sir, I was very near once having that honour.

Coup. Well, live and hope; don't be discouraged; eat with him, and drink with him, and do what he bids thee, and it may be thy reward at last, as well as another's.—[*To* TOM FASHION.] Well, sir, you must know I have done you the kindness to make up a match for your brother.

Fash. Sir, I am very much beholden to you truly!

Coup. You may be, sirrah, before the wedding-day yet. The lady is a great heiress; fifteen

hundred pound a year, and a great bag of money; the match is concluded, the writings are drawn, and the pipkin's to be cracked in a fortnight. Now you must know, stripling (with respect to your mother), your brother's the son of a whore.

Fash. Good!

Coup. He has given me a bond of a thousand pounds for helping him to this fortune, and has promised me as much more in ready money upon the day of marriage, which, I understand by a friend, he ne'er designs to pay me. If therefore you will be a generous young dog, and secure me five thousand pounds, I'll be a covetous old rogue, and help you to the lady.

Fash. Egad, if thou canst bring this about, I'll have thy statue cast in brass. But don't you dote, you old pander you, when you talk at this rate?

Coup. That your youthful parts shall judge of. This plump partridge, that I tell you of, lives in the country, fifty miles off, with her honoured parents, in a lonely old house which nobody comes near; she never goes abroad, nor sees company at home. To prevent all misfortunes, she has her breeding within doors; the parson of the parish teaches her to play on the bass-viol, the clerk to sing, her nurse to dress, and her father to dance. In short, nobody can give you admittance there but I; nor can I do it any other way than by making you pass for your brother.

Fash. And how the devil wilt thou do that?

Coup. Without the devil's aid, I warrant thee. Thy brother's face not one of the family ever saw, the whole business has been managed by me, and all the letters go through my hands. The last that was writ to Sir Tunbelly Clumsey (for that's the old gentleman's name), was to tell him, his lordship would be down in a fortnight to consummate. Now, you shall go away immediately, pretend you writ that letter only to have the romantic pleasure of surprising your mistress; fall desperately in love, as soon as you see her; make that your plea for marrying her immediately, and, when the fatigue of the wedding-night's over, you shall send me a swinging purse of gold, you dog you.

Fash. Egad, old dad, I'll put my hand in thy bosom now.

Coup. Ah, you young hot lusty thief, let me muzzle you!—[*Kisses him.*] Sirrah, let me muzzle you.

Fash. [*Aside.*] Psha, the old lecher!

Coup. Well; I'll warrant thou hast not a farthing of money in thy pocket now; no, one may see it in thy face.

Fash. Not a souse, by Jupiter!

Coup. Must I advance thee?—Well, sirrah, be at my lodgings in half an hour, and I'll see what may be done; we'll sign and seal, and eat a pullet, and when I have given thee some farther instructions, thou shalt hoist sail and be gone.—[*Kisses him.*] T'other buss, and so adieu.

Fash. Um! psha!

Coup. Ah, you young warm dog you, what a delicious night will the bride have on't! [*Exit.*

Fash. So, Lory; Providence, thou seest at last, takes care of men of merit: we are in a fair way to be great people.

Lory. Ay, sir, if the devil don't step between the cup and the lip, as he uses to do.

Fash. Why, faith, he has played me many a damned trick to spoil my fortune, and egad I'm almost afraid he's at work about it again now; but if I should tell thee how, thou'dst wonder at me.

Lory. Indeed, sir, I should not.

Fash. How dost know?

Lory. Because, sir, I have wondered at you so often, I can wonder at you no more.

Fash. No! what wouldst thou say if a qualm of conscience should spoil my design?

Lory. I would eat my words, and wonder more than ever.

Fash. Why, faith, Lory, though I am a young rake-hell, and have played many a roguish trick; this is so full-grown a cheat, I find I must take pains to come up to't, I have scruples—

Lory. They are strong symptoms of death; if you find they increase, pray, sir, make your will.

Fash. No, my conscience shan't starve me neither. But thus far I'll hearken to it; before I execute this project, I'll try my brother to the bottom, I'll speak to him with the temper of a philosopher; my reasons (though they press him home) shall yet be clothed with so much modesty, not one of all the truths they urge shall be so naked to offend his sight. If he has yet so much humanity about him as to assist me (though with a moderate aid), I'll drop my project at his feet, and show him how I can do for him much more than what I ask he'd do for me. This one conclusive trial of him I resolve to make—

Succeed or no, still victory's my lot;
If I subdue his heart, 'tis well; if not,
I shall subdue my conscience to my plot.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Loveless's *Town-House.*

Enter Loveless *and* Amanda.

Love. How do you like these lodgings, my dear? For my part, I am so well pleased with them, I shall hardly remove whilst we stay in town, if you are satisfied.

Aman. I am satisfied with everything that pleases you, else I had not come to town at all.

Love. Oh! a little of the noise and bustle of the world sweetens the pleasures of retreat. We shall find the charms of our retirement doubled, when we return to it.

Aman. That pleasing prospect will be my chiefest entertainment, whilst (much against my will) I am obliged to stand surrounded with these empty pleasures, which 'tis so much the fashion to be fond of.

Love. I own most of them are indeed but empty; nay, so empty, that one would wonder by what magic power they act, when they induce us to be vicious for their sakes. Yet some there are we may speak kindlier of. There are delights (of

which a private life is destitute) which may divert an honest man, and be a harmless entertainment to a virtuous woman. The conversation of the town is one; and truly (with some small allowances), the plays, I think, may be esteemed another.

Aman. The plays, I must confess, have some small charms; and would have more, would they restrain that loose obscene encouragement to vice, which shocks, if not the virtue of some women, at least the modesty of all.

Love. But till that reformation can be made, I would not leave the wholesome corn for some intruding tares that grow amongst us. Doubtless the moral of a well-wrought scene is of prevailing force.—Last night there happened one that moved me strangely.

Aman. Pray, what was that?

Love. Why 'twas about—but 'tis not worth repeating.

Aman. Yes, pray let me know it.

Love. No; I think 'tis as well let alone.

Aman. Nay, now you make me have a mind to know.

Love. 'Twas a foolish thing. You'd perhaps grow jealous should I tell it you, though without a cause, Heaven knows.

Aman. I shall begin to think I have cause, if you persist in making it a secret.

Love. I'll then convince you you have none, by making it no longer so. Know then, I happened in the play to find my very character, only with the addition of a relapse; which struck me so, I put a sudden stop to a most harmless entertainment, which till then diverted me between the acts. 'Twas to admire the workmanship of nature, in the face of a young lady that sat some distance from me, she was so exquisitely handsome!—

Aman. So exquisitely handsome!

Love. Why do you repeat my words, my dear?

Aman. Because you seemed to speak them with such pleasure, I thought I might oblige you with their echo.

Love. Then you are alarmed, Amanda?

Aman. It is my duty to be so, when you are in danger.

Love. You are too quick in apprehending for me; all will be well when you have heard me out. I do confess I gazed upon her, nay, eagerly I gazed upon her.

Aman. Eagerly! that's with desire.

Love. No, I desired her not: I viewed her with a world of admiration, but not one glance of love.

Aman. Take heed of trusting to such nice distinctions.

Love. I did take heed; for observing in the play, that he who seemed to represent me there was, by an accident like this, unwarily surprised into a net, in which he lay a poor entangled slave, and brought a train of mischiefs on his head, I snatched my eyes away; they pleaded hard for leave to look again, but I grew absolute, and they obeyed.

Aman. Were they the only things that were inquisitive? Had I been in your place, my tongue, I fancy, had been curious too; I should have asked her name, and where she lived (yet still without design:)—Who was she, pray?

Love. Indeed I cannot tell.

Aman. You will not tell.

Love. By all that's sacred then, I did not ask.

Aman. Nor do you know what company was with her?

Love. I do not.

Aman. Then I am calm again.

Love. Why were you disturbed?

Aman. Had I then no cause?

Love. None, certainly.

Aman. I thought I had.

Love. But you thought wrong, Amanda: for turn the case, and let it be your story; should you come home, and tell me you had seen a handsome man, should I grow jealous because you had eyes?

Aman. But should I tell you he were exquisitely so; that I had gazed on him with admiration; that I had looked with eager eyes upon him; should you not think 'twere possible I might go one step further, and inquire his name?

Love. [*Aside.*] She has reason on her side, I have talked too much; but I must turn it off another way.—[*Aloud.*] Will you then make no difference, Amanda, between the language of our sex and yours? There is a modesty restrains your tongues, which makes you speak by halves when you commend; but roving flattery gives a loose to ours, which makes us still speak double what we think. You should not, therefore, in so strict a sense, take what I said to her advantage.

Aman. Those flights of flattery, sir, are to our faces only: when women once are out of hearing, you are as modest in your commendations as we are. But I shan't put you to the trouble of farther excuses, if you please this business shall rest here. Only give me leave to wish, both for your peace and mine, that you may never meet this miracle of beauty more.

Love. I am content.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Madam, there's a young lady at the door in a chair, desires to know whether your ladyship sees company. I think her name is Berinthia.

Aman. O dear! 'tis a relation I have not seen this five years. Pray her to walk in.—[*Exit* Servant.] Here's another beauty for you. She was young when I saw her last; but I hear she's grown extremely handsome.

Love. Don't you be jealous now; for I shall gaze upon her too.

Enter BERINTHIA.

—Ha! by Heavens the very woman! [*Aside.*

Ber. [*Saluting* AMANDA.] Dear Amanda, I did not expect to meet with you in town.

Aman. Sweet cousin, I'm overjoyed to see you. —Mr. Loveless, here's a relation and a friend of mine, I desire you'll be better acquainted with.

Love. [*Saluting* BERINTHIA] If my wife never desires a harder thing, madam, her request will be easily granted.

Ber. I think, madam, I ought to wish you joy.

Aman. Joy! Upon what?

Ber. Upon your marriage: you were a widow when I saw you last.

Love. You ought rather, madam, to wish me joy upon that, since I am the only gainer.

Ber. If she has got so good a husband as the world reports, she has gained enough to expect the compliments of her friends upon it.

Love. If the world is so favourable to me, to allow I deserve that title, I hope 'tis so just to my wife to own I derive it from her.

Ber. Sir, it is so just to you both, to own you are (and deserve to be) the happiest pair that live in it.

Love. I'm afraid we shall lose that character, madam, whenever you happen to change your condition.

Re-enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, my lord Foppington presents his humble service to you, and desires to know how you do. He but just now heard you were in town. He's at the next door; and if it be not inconvenient, he'll come and wait upon you.

Love. Lord Foppington!—I know him not.

Ber. Not his dignity, perhaps, but you do his person. 'Tis sir Novelty; he has bought a barony, in order to marry a great fortune. His patent has not been passed above eight-and-forty hours, and he has already sent how-do-ye's to all the town, to make 'em acquainted with his title.

Love. Give my service to his lordship, and let him know I am proud of the honour he intends me.—[*Exit* Servant.] Sure this addition of quality must have so improved his coxcomb, he can't but be very good company for a quarter of an hour.

Aman. Now it moves my pity more than my mirth, to see a man whom nature has made no fool, be so very industrious to pass for an ass.

Love. No, there you are wrong, Amanda; you should never bestow your pity upon those who take pains for your contempt. Pity those whom nature abuses, but never those who abuse nature.

Ber. Besides, the town would be robbed of one of its chiefest diversions, if it should become a crime to laugh at a fool.

Aman. I could never yet perceive the town inclined to part with any of its diversions, for the sake of their being crimes; but I have seen it very fond of some I think had little else to recommend 'em.

Ber. I doubt, Amanda, you are grown its enemy, you speak with so much warmth against it.

Aman. I must confess I am not much its friend.

Ber. Then give me leave to make you mine, by not engaging in its quarrel.

Aman. You have many stronger claims than that, Berinthia, whenever you think fit to plead your title.

Love. You have done well to engage a second, my dear; for here comes one will be apt to call you to an account for your country principles.

Enter Lord Foppington.

Lord Fop. Sir, I am your most humble servant.

Love. I wish you joy, my lord.

Lord Fop. O Lard, sir!—Madam, your ladyship's welcome to tawn.

Aman. I wish your lordship joy.

Lord Fop. O Heavens, madam—

Love. My lord, this young lady is a relation of my wife's.

Lord Fop. [*Saluting* Berinthia.] The beautifullest race of people upon earth, rat me! Dear Loveless, I am overjoyed to see you have brought your family to tawn again; I am, stap my vitals! [*Aside.*] For I design to lie with your wife.—[*To* Amanda.] Far Gad's sake, madam, haw has your ladyship been able to subsist thus long, under the fatigue of a country life?

Aman. My life has been very far from that, my lord; it has been a very quiet one.

Lord Fop. Why, that's the fatigue I speak of, madam. For 'tis impassible to be quiet without thinking; now thinking is to me the greatest fatigue in the world.

Aman. Does not your lordship love reading then?

Lord Fop. Oh, passionately, madam.—But I never think of what I read.

Ber. Why, can your lordship read without thinking?

Lord Fop. O Lard!—can your ladyship pray without devotion, madam?

Aman. Well, I must own I think books the best entertainment in the world.

Lord Fop. I am so much of your ladyship's mind, madam, that I have a private gallery, where I walk sometimes, is furnished with nothing but books and looking-glasses. Madam, I have gilded 'em, and ranged 'em, so prettily, before Gad, it is the most entertaining thing in the world to walk and look upon 'em.

Aman. Nay, I love a neat library too; but 'tis, I think, the inside of a book should recommend it most to us.

Lord Fop. That, I must confess, I am not altogether so fand of. Far to mind the inside of a book, is to entertain one's self with the forced product of another man's brain. Naw I think a man of quality and breeding may be much better diverted with the natural sprauts of his own. But to say the truth, madam, let a man love reading never so well, when once he comes to know this tawn, he finds so many better ways of passing away the four-and-twenty hours, that 'twere ten thousand pities he should consume his time in that. Far example, madam, my life; my life, madam, is a perpetual stream of pleasure, that glides through such a variety of entertainments, I believe the wisest of our ancestors never had the least conception of any of 'em. I rise, madam, about ten a-clack. I don't rise sooner, because 'tis the worst thing in the world for the complexion; nat that I pretend to be a beau; but a man must endeavour to look wholesome, lest he make so nauseous a figure in the side-bax, the ladies should be compelled to turn their eyes upon the play. So at ten a-clack, I say, I rise. Naw, if I find it a good day, I resalve to take a turn in the Park, and see the fine women; so huddle on my clothes, and get dressed by one. If it be nasty weather, I take a turn in the chocolate-hause: where as you walk, madam, you have the prettiest prospect in the world; you have looking-glasses all round you.—But I'm afraid I tire the company.

Ber. Not at all. Pray go on.

Lord Fop. Why then, ladies, from thence I go to dinner at Lacket's, where you are so nicely and delicately served, that, stap my vitals! they shall compose you a dish no bigger than a saucer, shall come to fifty shillings. Between eating my dinner (and washing my mouth, ladies) I spend my time, till I go to the play; where, till nine a-clack, I entertain myself with looking upon the company; and usually dispose of one hour more in leading them aut. So there's twelve of the four-and-twenty pretty well over. The other twelve, madam, are disposed of in two articles: in the first four I toast myself drunk, and in t'other eight I sleep myself sober again. Thus, ladies, you see my life is an eternal raund O of delights.

Love. 'Tis a heavenly one, indeed.

Aman. But I thought, my lord, you beaux spent a great deal of your time in intrigues: you have given us no account of 'em yet.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] Soh; she would inquire into my amours—That's jealousy:—she begins to be in love with me.—[*To* AMANDA] Why, madam, as to time for my intrigues, I usually make detachments of it from my other pleasures, according to the exigency. Far your ladyship may please to take notice, that those who intrigue with women of quality, have rarely occasion for above half an hour at a time: people of that rank being under those decorums, they can seldom give you a langer view than will just serve to shoot 'em flying. So that the course of my other pleasures is not very much interrupted by my amours.

Love. But your lordship is now become a pillar of the state; you must attend the weighty affairs of the nation.

Lord Fop. Sir,—as to weighty affairs—I leave them to weighty heads. I never intend mine shall be a burden to my body.

Love. O but you'll find the house will expect your attendance.

Lord Fop. Sir, you'll find the house will compound for my appearance.

Love. But your friends will take it ill if you don't attend their particular causes.

Lord Fop. Not, sir, if I come time enough to give 'em my particular vote.

Ber. But pray, my lord, how do you dispose of yourself on Sundays? for that, methinks, should hang wretchedly on your hands.

Lord Fop. Why faith, madam—Sunday—is a vile day, I must confess. I intend to move for leave to bring in a bill, that players may work upon it, as well as the hackney coaches. Though this I must say for the government, it leaves us the churches to entertain us.—But then again, they begin so abominable early, a man must rise by candle-light to get dressed by the psalm.

Ber. Pray which church does your lordship most oblige with your presence?

Lord Fop. Oh, St. James's, madam:—there's much the best company.

Aman. Is there good preaching too?

Lord Fop. Why faith, madam—I can't tell. A man must have very little to do there that can give an account of the sermon.

Ber. You can give us an account of the ladies at least.

Lord Fop. Or I deserve to be excommunicated. —There is my lady Tattle, my lady Prate, my lady Titter, my lady Leer, my lady Giggle, and my lady Grin. These sit in the front of the boxes, and all church-time are the prettiest company in the world, stap my vitals!—[*To* AMANDA.] Mayn't we hope for the honour to see your ladyship added to our society, madam?

Aman. Alas, my lord! I am the worst company in the world at church: I'm apt to mind the prayers, or the sermon, or—

Lord Fop. One is indeed strangely apt at church to mind what one should not do. But I hope, madam, at one time or other, I shall have the honour to lead your ladyship to your coach there.—[*Aside.*] Methinks she seems strangely pleased with everything I say to her.—'Tis a vast pleasure to receive encouragement from a woman before her husband's face.—I have a good mind to pursue my conquest, and speak the thing plainly to her at once. Egad I'll do't, and that in so cavalier a manner, she shall be surprised at it.—[*Aloud.*] Ladies, I'll take my leave; I'm afraid I begin to grow troublesome with the length of my visit.

Aman. Your lordship's too entertaining to grow troublesome anywhere.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] That now was as much as if she had said—pray lie with me. I'll let her see I'm quick of apprehension.—[*To* AMANDA.] O Lard, madam! I had like to have forgot a secret, I must needs tell your ladyship.—[*To* LOVELESS.] Ned, you must not be so jealous now as to listen.

Love. Not I, my lord; I'm too fashionable a husband to pry into the secrets of my wife.

Lord Fop. [*To* AMANDA, *squeezing her hand.*] I am in love with you to desperation, strike me speechless!

Aman. [*Giving him a box on the ear.*] Then, thus I return your passion.—An impudent fool!

Lord Fop. Gads curse, madam, I'm a peer of the realm!

Love. Hey; what the devil do you affront my wife, sir? Nay then—

[*They draw and fight. The ladies run shrieking for help.*

Aman. Ah! What has my folly done! Help! murder! help! part 'em for Heaven's sake.

Lord Fop. [*Falling back, and leaning upon his sword.*] Ah—quite through the body!—stap my vitals!

Enter Servants.

Love. [*Running to him.*] I hope I han't killed the fool however.—Bear him up.—Where's your wound?

Lord Fop. Just through the guts.

Love. Call a surgeon there.—Unbutton him quickly.

Lord Fop. Ay, pray make haste. [*Exit* Servant.

Love. This mischief you may thank yourself for.

Lord Fop. I may so—love's the devil indeed, Ned.

Re-enter Servant *with* SYRINGE.

Ser. Here's Mr. Syringe, sir, was just going by the door.

Lord Fop. He's the welcomest man alive.

Syr. Stand by, stand by, stand by! Pray, gentlemen, stand by. Lord have mercy upon us! did you never see a man run through the body before? pray, stand by.

Lord Fop. Ah, Mr. Syringe—I'm a dead man!

Syr. A dead man and I by!—I should laugh to see that, egad!

Love. Prithee don't stand prating, but look upon his wound.

Syr. Why, what if I won't look upon his wound this hour, sir?

Love. Why then he'll bleed to death, sir.

Syr. Why, then I'll fetch him to life again, sir.

Love. 'Slife, he's run through the guts, I tell thee.

Syr. Would he were run through the heart, I should get the more credit by his cure. Now I hope you are satisfied?—Come, now let me come at him; now let me come at him.—[*Viewing his wound.*] Oons, what a gash is here!—Why, sir, a man may drive a coach and six horses into your body.

Lord Fop. Ho!

Syr. Why, what the devil, have you run the

gentleman through with a scythe?—[*Aside.*] A little prick between the skin and the ribs, that's all.

Love. Let me see his wound.

Syr. Then you shall dress it, sir; for if anybody looks upon it, I won't.

Love. Why, thou art the veriest coxcomb I ever saw.

Syr. Sir, I am not master of my trade for nothing.

Lord Fop. Surgeon!

Syr. Well, sir.

Lord Fop. Is there any hopes?

Syr. Hopes!—I can't tell.—What are you willing to give for your cure?

Lord Fop. Five hundred paunds with pleasure.

Syr. Why then perhaps there may be hopes. But we must avoid further delay.—Here; help the gentleman into a chair, and carry him to my house presently, that's the properest place—[*Aside*] to bubble him out of his money.—[*Aloud.*] Come, a chair, a chair quickly—there, in with him.

[*They put him into a chair.*

Lord Fop. Dear Loveless—adieu! If I die—I forgive thee; and if I live—I hope thou wilt do as much by me. I am very sorry you and I should quarrel; but I hope here's an end on't, for if you are satisfied—I am.

Love. I shall hardly think it worth my prosecuting any further, so you may be at rest, sir.

Lord Fop. Thou art a generous fellow, strike me dumb!—[*Aside.*] But thou hast an impertinent wife, stap my vitals!

Syr. So, carry him off! carry him off! we shall have him prate himself into a fever by-and-by; carry him off. [*Exit with* LORD FOPPINGTON.

Aman. Now on my knees, my dear, let me ask your pardon for my indiscretion, my own I never shall obtain.

Love. Oh, there's no harm done: you served him well.

Aman. He did indeed deserve it. But I tremble to think how dear my indiscreet resentment might have cost you.

Love. Oh, no matter, never trouble yourself about that.

Ber. For Heaven's sake, what was't he did to you?

Aman. O nothing; he only squeezed me kindly by the hand, and frankly offered me a coxcomb's heart. I know I was to blame to resent it as I did, since nothing but a quarrel could ensue. But the fool so surprised me with his insolence, I was not mistress of my fingers.

Ber. Now, I dare swear, he thinks you had 'em at great command, they obeyed you so readily.

Enter WORTHY.

Wor. Save you, save you, good people: I'm glad to find you all alive; I met a wounded peer carrying off. For Heaven's sake, what was the matter.

Love. Oh, a trifle! He would have lain with my wife before my face, so she obliged him with a box o'th' ear, and I run him through the body: that was all.

Wor. Bagatelle on all sides. But, pray madam, how long has this noble lord been a humble servant of yours?

Aman. This is the first I have heard on't. So, I suppose, 'tis his quality more than his love has brought him into this adventure. He thinks his title an authentic passport to every woman's heart below the degree of a peeress.

Wor. He's coxcomb enough to think anything. But I would not have you brought into trouble for him: I hope there's no danger of his life?

Love. None at all. He's fallen into the hands of a roguish surgeon, who I perceive designs to frighten a little money out of him. But I saw his wound, 'tis nothing; he may go to the play to-night, if he pleases.

Wor. I am glad you have corrected him without farther mischief. And now, sir, if these ladies have no farther service for you, you'll oblige me if you can go to the place I spoke to you of t'other day.

Love. With all my heart.—[*Aside.*] Though I could wish, methinks, to stay and gaze a little longer on that creature. Good gods, how beautiful she is!—But what have I to do with beauty? I have already had my portion, and must not covet more.—[*Aloud.*] Come, sir, when you please.

Wor. Ladies, your servant.

Aman. Mr. Loveless, pray one word with you before you go.

Love. [*To* WORTHY.] I'll overtake you, sir.—[*Exit* WORTHY.] What would my dear?

Aman. Only a woman's foolish question,—how do you like my cousin here?

Love. Jealous already, Amanda!

Aman. Not at all, I ask you for another reason.

Love. [*Aside.*] Whate'er her reason be, I must not tell her true.—[*To* AMANDA.] Why, I confess she's handsome. But you must not think I slight your kinswoman, if I own to you, of all the women who may claim that character, she is the last would triumph in my heart.

Aman. I'm satisfied.

Love. Now tell me why you asked?

Aman. At night I will. Adieu.

Love. I'm yours. [*Kisses her and exit.*

Aman. [*Aside.*] I'm glad to find he does not like her; for I have a great mind to persuade her to come and live with me.—[*Aloud.*] Now, dear Berinthia, let me inquire a little into your affairs: for I do assure you I am enough your friend to interest myself in everything that concerns you.

Ber. You formerly have given me such proofs on't I should be very much to blame to doubt it; I am sorry I have no secrets to trust you with, that I might convince you how entire a confidence I durst repose in you.

Aman. Why, is it possible that one so young and beautiful as you should live and have no secrets.

Ber. What secrets do you mean?

Aman. Lovers.

Ber. Oh, twenty! but not one secret one amongst 'em. Lovers in this age have too much honour to do anything underhand; they do all aboveboard.

Aman. That now, methinks, would make me hate a man.

Ber. But the women of the town are of another mind: for by this means a lady may (with the expense of a few coquette glances) lead twenty fools about in a string for two or three years together. Whereas, if she should allow 'em greater favours, and oblige 'em to secrecy, she would not keep one of 'em a fortnight.

Aman. There's something indeed in that to

satisfy the vanity of a woman, but I can't comprehend how the men find their account in it.

Ber. Their entertainment, I must confess, is a riddle to me. For there's very few of them ever get farther than a bow and an ogle. I have half a score for my share, who follow me all over the town; and at the play, the Park, and the church, do (with their eyes) say the violentest things to me.—But I never hear any more of 'em.

Aman. What can be the reason of that?

Ber. One reason is, they don't know how to go farther. They have had so little practice, they don't understand the trade. But, besides their ignorance, you must know there is not one of my half score lovers but what follows half a score mistresses. Now, their affections being divided amongst so many, are not strong enough for any one to make 'em pursue her to the purpose. Like a young puppy in a warren, they have a flirt at all, and catch none.

Aman. Yet they seem to have a torrent of love to dispose of.

Ber. They have so. But 'tis like the river of a modern philosopher, (whose works, though a woman, I have read,) it sets out with a violent stream, splits in a thousand branches, and is all lost in the sands.

Aman. But do you think this river of love runs all its course without doing any mischief? Do you think it overflows nothing?

Ber. O yes; 'tis true, it never breaks into anybody's ground that has the least fence about it; but it overflows all the commons that lie in its way. And this is the utmost achievement of those dreadful champions in the field of love—the beaux.

Aman. But prithee, Berinthia, instruct me a little farther; for I am so great a novice I'm almost ashamed on't. My husband's leaving me whilst I was young and fond threw me into that depth of discontent, that ever since I have led so private and recluse a life, my ignorance is scarce conceivable. I therefore fain would be instructed. Not (Heaven knows) that what you call intrigues have any charms for me; my love and principles are too well fixed. The practic part of all unlawful love is—

Ber. Oh, 'tis abominable! But for the speculative; that we must all confess is entertaining. The conversation of all the virtuous women in the town turns upon that and new clothes.

Aman. Pray be so just then to me to believe, 'tis with a world of innocency I would inquire, whether you think those women we call women of reputation, do really 'scape all other men, as they do those shadows of 'em, the beaux.

Ber. O no, Amanda; there are a sort of men make dreadful work amongst 'em: men that may be called the beaux antipathy; for they agree in nothing but walking upon two legs.—These have brains, the beau has none. These are in love with their mistress, the beau with himself. They take care of her reputation, he's industrious to destroy it. They are decent, he's a fop. They are sound, he's rotten. They are men, he's an ass.

Aman. If this be their character, I fancy we had here e'en now a pattern of 'em both.

Ber. His lordship and Mr. Worthy?

Aman. The same.

Ber. As for the lord, he's eminently so; and for the other, I can assure you, there's not a man in town who has a better interest with the women, that are worth having an interest with. But 'tis all private: he's like a back-stair minister at court, who, whilst the reputed favourites are sauntering in the bedchamber, is ruling the roast in the closet.

Aman. He answers then the opinion I had ever of him. Heavens! What a difference there is between a man like him, and that vain nauseous fop, sir Novelty.—[*Taking her hand.*] I must acquaint you with a secret, cousin. 'Tis not that fool alone has talked to me of love, Worthy has been tampering too. 'Tis true, he has done it in vain: not all his charms or art have power to shake me. My love, my duty, and my virtue, are such faithful guards, I need not fear my heart should e'er betray me. But what I wonder at is this: I find I did not start at his proposal, as when it came from one whom I contemned. I therefore mention this attempt, that I may learn from you whence it proceeds; that vice (which cannot change its nature) should so far change at least its shape, as that the self-same crime proposed from one shall seem a monster gaping at your ruin; when from another it shall look so kind, as though it were your friend, and never meant to harm you. Whence, think you, can this difference proceed? For 'tis not love, Heaven knows.

Ber. O no; I would not for the world believe it were. But possibly, should there a dreadful sentence pass upon you, to undergo the rage of both their passions; the pain you apprehend from one might seem so trivial to the other, the danger would not quite so much alarm you.

Aman. Fy, fy, Berinthia! you would indeed alarm me, could you incline me to a thought, that all the merit of mankind combined could shake that tender love I bear my husband. No, he sits triumphant in my heart, and nothing can dethrone him.

Ber. But should he abdicate again, do you think you should preserve the vacant throne ten tedious winters more in hopes of his return?

Aman. Indeed I think I should. Though I confess, after those obligations he has to me, should he abandon me once more, my heart would grow extremely urgent with me to root him thence, and cast him out for ever.

Ber. Were I that thing they call a slighted wife, somebody should run the risk of being that thing they call—a husband.

Aman. O fy, Berinthia! no revenge should ever be taken against a husband. But to wrong his bed is a vengeance, which of all vengeance—

Ber. Is the sweetest, ha! ha! ha! Don't I talk madly?

Aman. Madly indeed.

Ber. Yet I'm very innocent.

Aman. That I dare swear you are. I know how to make allowances for your humour: you were always very entertaining company; but I find since marriage and widowhood have shown you the world a little, you are very much improved.

Ber. [*Aside.*] Alack a-day, there has gone more than that to improve me, if she knew all!

Aman. For Heaven's sake, Berinthia, tell me what way I shall take to persuade you to come and live with me?

Ber. Why, one way in the world there is—and but one.

Aman. Pray which is that?

Ber. It is to assure me—I shall be very welcome.

Aman. If that be all, you shall e'en lie here tonight.

Ber. To-night!

Aman. Yes, to-night.

Ber. Why, the people where I lodge will think me mad.

Aman. Let 'em think what they please.

Ber. Say you so, Amanda? Why then they shall think what they please: for I'm a young widow, and I care not what anybody thinks. Ah, Amanda, it's a delicious thing to be a young widow!

Aman. You'll hardly make me think so.

Ber. Phu! because you are in love with your husband: but that is not every woman's case.

Aman. I hope 'twas yours at least.

Ber. Mine, say ye? Now I have a great mind to tell you a lie, but I should do it so awkwardly you'd find me out.

Aman. Then e'en speak the truth.

Ber. Shall I?—Then after all I did love him, Amanda—as a nun does penance.

Aman. Why did not you refuse to marry him, then?

Ber. Because my mother would have whipped me.

Aman. How did you live together?

Ber. Like man and wife, asunder.—He loved the country, I the town. He hawks and hounds, I coaches and equipage. He eating and drinking, I carding and playing. He the sound of a horn, I the squeak of a fiddle. We were dull company at table, worse a-bed. Whenever we met, we gave one another the spleen; and never agreed but once, which was about lying alone.

Aman. But tell me one thing truly and sincerely.

Ber. What's that?

Aman. Notwithstanding all these jars, did not his death at last extremely trouble you?

Ber. O yes. Not that my present pangs were so very violent, but the after-pains were intolerable. I was forced to wear a beastly widow's band a twelvemonth for't.

Aman. Women, I find, have different inclinations.

Ber. Women, I find, keep different company. When your husband ran away from you, if you had fallen into some of my acquaintance, 'twould have saved you many a tear. But you go and live with a grandmother, a bishop, and an old nurse; which was enough to make any woman break her heart for her husband. Pray, Amanda, if ever you are a widow again, keep yourself so, as I do.

Aman. Why! do you then resolve you'll never marry?

Ber. O, no; I resolve I will.

Aman. How so?

Ber. That I never may.

Aman. You banter me.

Ber. Indeed I don't. But I consider I'm a woman, and form my resolutions accordingly.

Aman. Well, my opinion is, form what resolution you will, matrimony will be the end on't.

Ber. Faith it won't.

Aman. How do you know?

Ber. I am sure on't.

Aman. Why, do you think 'tis impossible for you to fall in love?

Ber. No.

Aman. Nay, but to grow so passionately fond, that nothing but the man you love can give you rest.

Ber. Well, what then?

Aman. Why then you'll marry him.

Ber. How do you know that?

Aman. Why, what can you do else?

Ber. Nothing—but sit and cry.

Aman. Psha!

Ber. Ah, poor Amanda! you have led a country life: but if you'll consult the widows of this town, they'll tell you, you should never take a lease of a house you can hire for a quarter's warning. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Lord Foppington's *House.*

Enter Lord Foppington *and* Servant.

Lord Fop. Hey, fellow, let the coach come to the door.

Ser. Will your lordship venture so soon to expose yourself to the weather?

Lord Fop. Sir, I will venture as soon as I can, to expose myself to the ladies; though give me my cloak, however; for in that side-box, what between the air that comes in at the door on one side, and the intolerable warmth of the masks on t'other, a man gets so many heats and colds, 'twould destroy the canstitution of a harse.

Ser. [*Putting on his cloak.*] I wish your lordship would please to keep house a little longer; I'm afraid your honour does not well consider your wound.

Lord Fop. My wound!—I would not be in eclipse another day, though I had as many wounds in my guts as I have had in my heart. [*Exit* Servant.

Enter Tom Fashion.

Fash. Brother, your servant. How do you find yourself to-day?

Lord Fop. So well, that I have ardered my coach to the door: so there's no great danger of death this baut, Tam.

Fash. I'm very glad of it.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] That I believe's a lie.—[*Aloud.*] Prithee, Tam, tell me one thing: did not your heart cut a caper up to your mauth, when you heard I was run through the bady?

Fash. Why do you think it should?

Lord Fop. Because I remember mine did so, when I heard my father was shat through the head.

Fash. It then did very ill.

Lord Fop. Prithee, why so?

Fash. Because he used you very well.

Lord Fop. Well?—naw, strike me dumb! he starved me. He has let me want a thausand women for want of a thausand paund.

Fash. Then he hindered you from making a

great many ill bargains, for I think no woman is worth money that will take money.

Lord Fop. If I were a younger brother, I should think so too.

Fash. Why, is it possible you can value a woman that's to be bought?

Lord Fop. Prithee, why not as well as a padnag?

Fash. Because a woman has a heart to dispose of; a horse has none.

Lord Fop. Look you, Tam, of all things that belang to a woman, I have an aversion to her heart. Far when once a woman has given you her heart—you can never get rid of the rest of her bady.

Fash. This is strange doctrine. But pray in your amours how is it with your own heart?

Lord Fop. Why, my heart in my amours—is like—my heart aut of my amours; *à la glace.* My bady, Tam, is a watch; and my heart is the pendulum to it; whilst the finger runs raund to every hour in the circle, that still beats the same time.

Fash. Then you are seldom much in love?

Lord Fop. Never, stap my vitals!

Fash. Why then did you make all this bustle about Amanda?

Lord Fop. Because she was a woman of an insolent virtue, and I thought myself piqued in honour to debauch her.

Fash. Very well.—[*Aside.*] Here's a rare fellow for you, to have the spending of five thousand pounds a year! But now for my business with him.—[*Aloud.*] Brother, though I know to talk to you of business (especially of money) is a theme not quite so entertaining to you as that of the ladies; my necessities are such, I hope you'll have patience to hear me.

Lord Fop. The greatness of your necessities, Tam, is the worst argument in the world for your being patiently heard. I do believe you are going to make me a very good speech, but, strike me dumb! it has the worst beginning of any speech I have heard this twelvemonth.

Fash. I'm very sorry you think so.

Lord Fop. I do believe thou art. But come, let's know thy affair quickly; far 'tis a new play, and I shall be so rumpled and squeezed with pressing through the crawd, to get to my servant, the women will think I have lain all night in my clothes.

Fash. Why then (that I may not be the author of so great a misfortune) my case in a word is this. The necessary expenses of my travels have so much exceeded the wretched income of my annuity, that I have been forced to mortgage it for five hundred pounds, which is spent; so that unless you are so kind to assist me in redeeming it, I know no remedy but to take a purse.

Lord Fop. Why, faith, Tam—to give you my sense of the thing, I do think taking a purse the best remedy in the world: for if you succeed, you are relieved that way; if you are taken—you are relieved t'other.

Fash. I'm glad to see you are in so pleasant a humour, I hope I shall find the effects on't.

Lord Fop. Why, do you then really think it a reasonable thing I should give you five hundred paunds?

Fash. I do not ask it as a due, brother, I am willing to receive it as a favour.

Lord Fop. Thau art willing to receive it any haw, strike me speechless! But these are damned times to give money in, taxes are so great, repairs so exorbitant, tenants such rogues, and periwigs so dear, that the devil take me, I am reduced to that extremity in my cash, I have been farced to retrench in that one article of sweet pawder, till I have braught it dawn to five guineas a manth. Naw judge, Tam, whether I can spare you five hundred paunds.

Fash. If you can't I must starve, that's all.—[*Aside.*] Damn him!

Lord Fop. All I can say is, you should have been a better husband.

Fash. Oons, if you can't live upon five thousand a year, how do you think I should do't upon two hundred?

Lord Fop. Don't be in a passion, Tam, far passion is the most unbecoming thing in the world—to the face. Look you, I don't love to say anything to you to make you malancholy; but upon this occasion I must take leave to put you in mind, that a running horse does require more attendance than a coach-horse. Nature has made some difference 'twixt you and I.

Fash. Yes, she has made you older.—[*Aside.*] Pox take her!

Lord Fop. That is nat all, Tam.

Fash. Why, what is there else?

Lord Fop. [*Looking first upon himself, then upon his brother.*] Ask the ladies.

Fash. Why, thou essence-bottle! thou musk-cat! dost thou then think thou hast any advantage over me, but what Fortune has given thee?

Lord Fop. I do—stap my vitals!

Fash. Now, by all that's great and powerful, thou art the prince of coxcombs!

Lord Fop. Sir—I am praud of being at the head of so prevailing a party.

Fash. Will nothing then provoke thee? Draw, coward!

Lord Fop. Look you, Tam, you know I have always taken you for a mighty dull fellow, and here is one of the foolishest plats broke out that I have seen a long time. Your paverty makes your life so burdensome to you, you would provoke me to a quarrel, in hopes either to slip through my lungs into my estate, or to get yourself run through the guts, to put an end to your pain. But I will disappoint you in both your designs; far, with the temper of a philasapher, and the discretion of a statesman—I will go to the play with my sword in my scabbard. [*Exit.*

Fash. So! Farewell, snuff-box! and now, conscience, I defy thee.—Lory!

Enter LORY.

Lory. Sir!

Fash. Here's rare news, Lory; his lordship has given me a pill has purged off all my scruples.

Lory. Then my heart's at ease again. For I have been in a lamentable fright, sir, ever since your conscience had the impudence to intrude into your company.

Fash. Be at peace, it will come there no more: my brother has given it a wring by the nose, and I have kicked it down stairs. So run away to the inn; get the horses ready quickly, and bring 'em to old Coupler's, without a moment's delay.

Lory. Then, sir, you are going straight about the fortune?

Fash. I am. Away! fly, Lory!

Lory. The happiest day I ever saw. I'm upon the wing already. [*Exeunt severally*.

SCENE II.—*A Garden adjoining* LOVELESS's *Lodgings*.

Enter LOVELESS *and* Servant.

Love. Is my wife within?

Ser. No, sir, she has been gone out this half hour.

Love. 'Tis well, leave me. [*Exit* Servant.]
Sure fate has yet some business to be done,
Before Amanda's heart and mine must rest;
Else, why amongst those legions of her sex,
Which throng the world,
Should she pick out for her companion
The only one on earth
Whom nature has endow'd for her undoing?
Undoing, was't, I said!—who shall undo her?
Is not her empire fix'd? am I not hers?
Did she not rescue me, a grovelling slave,
When chain'd and bound by that black tyrant vice,
I labour'd in his vilest drudgery?
Did she not ransom me, and set me free?
Nay more: when by my follies sunk
To a poor tatter'd despicable beggar,
Did she not lift me up to envied fortune!
Give me herself, and all that she possess'd?
Without a thought of more return,
Than what a poor repenting heart might make her.
Han't she done this? And if she has,
Am I not strongly bound to love her for it?
To love her!—why do I not love her then?
By earth and heaven I do!
Nay, I have demonstration that I do:
For I would sacrifice my life to serve her.
Yet hold—if laying down my life
Be demonstration of my love,
What is't I feel in favour of Berinthia?
For should she be in danger, methinks I could incline to risk it for her service too; and yet I do not love her. How then subsists my proof?—Oh, I have found it out! What I would do for one, is demonstration of my love; and if I'd do as much for t'other: it there is demonstration of my friendship.—Ay—it must be so. I find I'm very much her friend. Yet let me ask myself one puzzling question more: Whence springs this mighty friendship all at once? For our acquaintance is of later date. Now friendship's said to be a plant of tedious growth, its root composed of tender fibres, nice in their taste, cautious in spreading,
Check'd with the least corruption in the soil;
Long ere it take,
And longer still ere it appear to do so:
Whilst mine is in a moment shot so high,
And fix'd so fast,
It seems beyond the power of storms to shake it.
I doubt it thrives too fast. [*Musing*.

Enter BERINTHIA.

Ah, she here!—Nay, then take heed my heart, for there are dangers towards.

Ber. What makes you look so thoughtful, sir? I hope you are not ill.

Love. I was debating, madam, whether I was so or not; and that was it which made me look so thoughtful.

Ber. Is it then so hard a matter to decide? I thought all people had been acquainted with their own bodies, though few people know their own minds.

Love. What if the distemper, I suspect, be in the mind?

Ber. Why then I'll undertake to prescribe you a cure.

Love. Alas! you undertake you know not what.

Ber. So far at least then allow me to be a physician.

Love. Nay, I'll allow you so yet further: for I have reason to believe, should I put myself into your hands, you would increase my distemper.

Ber. Perhaps I might have reasons from the college not to be too quick in your cure; but 'tis possible I might find ways to give you often ease, sir.

Love. Were I but sure of that, I'd quickly lay my case before you.

Ber. Whether you are sure of it or no, what risk do you run in trying?

Love. Oh! a very great one.

Ber. How?

Love. You might betray my distemper to my wife.

Ber. And so lose all my practice.

Love. Will you then keep my secret?

Ber. I will, if it don't burst me.

Love. Swear.

Ber. I do.

Love. By what?

Ber. By woman.

Love. That's swearing by my deity. Do it by your own, or I shan't believe you.

Ber. By man then.

Love. I'm satisfied. Now hear my symptoms, and give me your advice. The first were these:
When 'twas my chance to see you at the play,
A random glance you threw at first alarm'd me,
I could not turn my eyes from whence the danger came:
I gazed upon you till you shot again,
And then my fears came on me.
My heart began to pant, my limbs to tremble,
My blood grew thin, my pulse beat quick, my eyes
Grew hot and dim, and all the frame of nature
Shook with apprehension.
'Tis true, some small recruits of resolution
My manhood brought to my assistance;
And by their help I made a stand a while,
But found at last your arrows flew so thick,
They could not fail to pierce me; so left the field,
And fled for shelter to Amanda's arms.
What think you of these symptoms, pray?

Ber. Feverish every one of 'em.
But what relief pray did your wife afford you?

Love. Why, instantly she let me blood;
Which for the present much assuaged my flame.
But when I saw you, out it burst again,
And raged with greater fury than before.
Nay, since you now appear, 'tis so increased,
That in a moment, if you do not help me,
I shall, whilst you look on, consume to ashes.
[*Takes hold of her hand*.

Ber. [*Breaking from him.*] O Lard, let me go? 'Tis the plague, and we shall all be infected.

Love. [*Catching her in his arms, and kissing her.*] Then we'll die together, my charming angel!

Ber. O Ged—the devil's in you!—Lord, let me go, here's somebody coming.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, my lady's come home, and desires to speak with you: she's in her chamber.

Love. Tell her I'm coming.—[*Exit* Servant.] But before I go, one glass of nectar more to drink her health.

Ber. Stand off, or I shall hate you, by Heavens!

Love. [*Kissing her.*] In matters of love, a woman's oath is no more to be minded than a man's.

Ber. Um—

Enter Worthy.

Wor. [*Aside.*] Ha! what's here? my old mistress, and so close, i' faith! I would not spoil her sport for the universe. [*Exit.*

Ber. O Ged!—Now do I pray to Heaven,—[*Exit* Loveless *running*] with all my heart and soul, that the devil in hell may take me, if ever—I was better pleased in my life!—This man has bewitched me, that's certain.—[*Sighing.*] Well, I am condemned; but, thanks to Heaven, I feel myself each moment more and more prepared for my execution. Nay, to that degree, I don't perceive I have the least fear of dying. No, I find, let the executioner be but a man, and there's nothing will suffer with more resolution than a woman. Well, I never had but one intrigue yet—but I confess I long to have another. Pray Heaven it end as the first did though, that we may both grow weary at a time; for 'tis a melancholy thing for lovers to outlive one another.

Re-enter Worthy.

Wor. [*Aside.*] This discovery's a lucky one, I hope to make a happy use on't. That gentlewoman there is no fool; so I shall be able to make her understand her interest.—[*Aloud.*] Your servant, madam; I need not ask you how you do, you have got so good a colour.

Ber. No better than I used to have, I suppose.

Wor. A little more blood in your cheeks.

Ber. The weather's hot.

Wor. If it were not, a woman may have a colour.

Ber. What do you mean by that?

Wor. Nothing.

Ber. Why do you smile then?

Wor. Because the weather's hot.

Ber. You'll never leave roguing, I see that.

Wor. [*Putting his finger to his nose.*] You'll never leave—I see that.

Ber. Well, I can't imagine what you drive at. Pray tell me what you mean?

Wor. Do you tell me; it's the same thing.

Ber. I can't.

Wor. Guess!

Ber. I shall guess wrong.

Wor. Indeed you won't.

Ber. Psha! either tell, or let it alone.

Wor. Nay, rather than let it alone, I will tell. But first I must put you in mind, that after what has passed 'twixt you and I, very few things ought to be secrets between us.

Ber. Why, what secrets do we hide? I know of none.

Wor. Yes, there are two; one I have hid from you, and t'other you would hide from me. You are fond of Loveless, which I have discovered; and I am fond of his wife—

Ber. Which I have discovered.

Wor. Very well, now I confess your discovery to be true: what do you say to mine?

Ber. Why, I confess—I would swear 'twere false, if I thought you were fool enough to believe me.

Wor. Now am I almost in love with you again. Nay, I don't know but I might be quite so, had I made one short campaign with Amanda. Therefore, if you find 'twould tickle your vanity to bring me down once more to your lure, e'en help me quickly to despatch her business, that I may have nothing else to do, but to apply myself to yours.

Ber. Do you then think, sir, I am old enough to be a bawd?

Wor. No, but I think you are wise enough to—

Ber. To do what?

Wor. To hoodwink Amanda with a gallant, that she mayn't see who is her husband's mistress.

Ber. [*Aside.*] He has reason: the hint's a good one.

Wor. Well, madam, what think you on't?

Ber. I think you are so much a deeper politician in these affairs than I am, that I ought to have a very great regard to your advice.

Wor. Then give me leave to put you in mind, that the most easy, safe, and pleasant situation for your own amour, is the house in which you now are, provided you keep Amanda from any sort of suspicion. That the way to do that, is to engage her in an intrigue of her own, making yourself her confidant. And the way to bring her to intrigue, is to make her jealous of her husband in a wrong place; which the more you foment, the less you'll be suspected. This is my scheme, in short; which if you follow as you should do, my dear Berinthia, we may all four pass the winter very pleasantly.

Ber. Well, I could be glad to have nobody's sins to answer for but my own. But where there is a necessity—

Wor. Right: as you say, where there is a necessity, a Christian is bound to help his neighbour. So, good Berinthia, lose no time, but let us begin the dance as fast as we can.

Ber. Not till the fiddles are in tune, pray sir. Your lady's strings will be very apt to fly, I can tell you that, if they are wound up too hastily. But if you'll have patience to screw 'em to the pitch by degrees, I don't doubt but she may endure to be played upon.

Wor. Ay, and will make admirable music too, or I'm mistaken. But have you had no private closet discourse with her yet about males and females, and so forth, which may give you hopes in her constitution? for I know her morals are the devil against us.

Ber. I have had so much discourse with her, that I believe, were she once cured of her fondness to her husband, the fortress of her virtue would not be so impregnable as she fancies.

Wor. What! she runs, I'll warrant you, into that common mistake of fond wives, who conclude themselves virtuous, because they can refuse a man they don't like, when they have got one they do.

Ber. True; and therefore I think 'tis a presumptuous thing in a woman to assume the name of

virtuous, till she has heartily hated her husband, and been soundly in love with somebody else. Whom, if she has withstood—then—much good may it do her.

Wor. Well, so much for her virtue. Now, one word of her inclinations, and every one to their post. What opinion do you find she has of me?

Ber. What you could wish; she thinks you handsome and discreet.

Wor. Good; that's thinking half-seas over. One tide more brings us into port.

Ber. Perhaps it may, though still remember, there's a difficult bar to pass.

Wor. I know there is, but I don't question I shall get well over it, by the help of such a pilot.

Ber. You may depend upon your pilot, she'll do the best she can; so weigh anchor and begone as soon as you please.

Wor. I'm under sail already. Adieu!

Ber. Bon voyage!—[*Exit* WORTHY.] So, here's fine work! What a business have I undertaken! I'm a very pretty gentlewoman truly! But there was no avoiding it: he'd have ruin'd me, if I had refused him. Besides, faith, I begin to fancy there may be as much pleasure in carrying on another body's intrigue as one's own. This at least is certain, it exercises almost all the entertaining faculties of a woman: for there's employment for hypocrisy, invention, deceit, flattery, mischief, and lying.

Enter AMANDA, *her* Maid *following her.*

Maid. If you please, madam, only to say, whether you'll have me buy 'em or not.

Aman. Yes, no, go fiddle! I care not what you do. Prithee leave me.

Maid. I have done. [*Exit.*

Ber. What in the name of Jove's the matter with you?

Aman. The matter, Berinthia! I'm almost mad, I'm plagued to death.

Ber. Who is it that plagues you?

Aman. Who do you think should plague a wife, but her husband?

Ber. O ho, is it come to that? We shall have you wish yourself a widow by and by.

Aman. Would I were anything but what I am! A base ungrateful man, after what I have done for him, to use me thus!

Ber. What, he has been ogling now, I'll warrant you?

Aman. Yes, he has been ogling.

Ber. And so you are jealous? is that all?

Aman. That all! is jealousy then nothing?

Ber. It should be nothing, if I were in your case.

Aman. Why, what would you do?

Ber. I'd cure myself.

Aman. How?

Ber. Let blood in the fond vein: care as little for my husband as he did for me.

Aman. That would not stop his course.

Ber. Nor nothing else, when the wind's in the warm corner. Look you, Amanda, you may build castles in the air, and fume, and fret, and grow thin and lean, and pale and ugly, if you please. But I tell you, no man worth having is true to his wife, or can be true to his wife, or ever was, or ever will be so.

Aman. Do you then really think he's false to me? for I did but suspect him.

Ber. Think so! I know he's so.

Aman. Is it possible? Pray tell me what you know.

Ber. Don't press me then to name names, for that I have sworn I won't do.

Aman. Well, I won't; but let me know all you can without perjury.

Ber. I'll let you know enough to prevent any wise woman's dying of the pip; and I hope you'll pluck up your spirits, and show upon occasion you can be as good a wife as the best of 'em.

Aman. Well, what a woman can do I'll endeavour.

Ber. Oh, a woman can do a great deal, if once she sets her mind to it. Therefore pray don't stand trifling any longer, and teasing yourself with this and that, and your love and your virtue, and I know not what: but resolve to hold up your head, get a-tiptoe, and look over 'em all; for to my certain knowledge your husband is a pickeering elsewhere.

Aman. You are sure on't?

Ber. Positively he fell in love at the play.

Aman. Right, the very same. Do you know the ugly thing?

Ber. Yes, I know her well enough; but she's no such ugly thing neither.

Aman. Is she very handsome?

Ber. Truly I think so.

Aman. Hey ho!

Ber. What do you sigh for now?

Aman. Oh, my heart!

Ber. [*Aside.*] Only the pangs of nature; she's in labour of her love; Heaven send her a quick delivery, I'm sure she has a good midwife.

Aman. I'm very ill, I must go to my chamber. Dear Berinthia, don't leave me a moment.

Ber. No, don't fear.—[*Aside.*] I'll see you safe brought to bed, I'll warrant you.

[*Exeunt*, AMANDA *leaning upon* BERINTHIA.

SCENE III.—Sir TUNBELLY CLUMSEY'S *Country-House.*

Enter TOM FASHION *and* LORY.

Fash. So, here's our inheritance, Lory, if we can but get into possession. But methinks the seat of our family looks like Noah's ark, as if the chief part on't were designed for the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field.

Lory. Pray, sir, don't let your head run upon the orders of building here; get but the heiress, let the devil take the house.

Fash. Get but the house, let the devil take the heiress, I say; at least if she be as old Coupler describes her. But come, we have no time to squander. Knock at the door.—[LORY *knocks two or three times.*] What the devil, have they got no ears in this house? Knock harder.

Lory. Egad, sir, this will prove some enchanted castle; we shall have the giant come out by and by with his club, and beat our brains out.

[*Knocks again.*

Fash. Hush; they come.

Servant. [*Within.*] Who is there?

Lory. Open the door and see. Is that your country breeding?

Ser. Ay, but two words to a bargain.—Tummus, is the blunderbuss primed?

Fash. Oons, give 'em good words, Lory; we shall be shot here a fortune-catching.

Lory. Egad, sir, I think y'are in the right on't.—Ho! Mr. What-d'ye-call-um.

[Servant *appears at the window with a blunderbuss.*

Ser. Weall naw, what's yare business?

Fash. Nothing, sir, but to wait upon sir Tunbelly, with your leave.

Ser. To weat upon sir Tunbelly! Why, you'll find that's just as sir Tunbelly pleases.

Fash. But will you do me the favour, sir, to know whether sir Tunbelly pleases or not?

Ser. Why, look you, do you see, with good words much may be done.—Ralph, go thy weas, and ask sir Tunbelly if he pleases to be waited upon. And dost hear? call to nurse that she may lock up Miss Hoyden before the geat's open.

Fash. D'ye hear that, Lory?

Lory. Ay, sir, I'm afraid we shall find a difficult job on't. Pray Heaven that old rogue Coupler han't sent us to fetch milk out of the gunroom.

Fash. I'll warrant thee all will go well. See, the door opens.

Enter Sir Tunbelly, *with his* Servants *armed with guns, clubs, pitchforks, scythes, &c.*

Lory. [*Running behind his master.*] O Lord! O Lord! O Lord! we are both dead men!

Fash. Take heed, fool! thy fear will ruin us.

Lory. My fear, sir! 'sdeath, sir, I fear nothing.—[*Aside.*] Would I were well up to the chin in a horsepond!

Sir Tun. Who is it here has any business with me?

Fash. Sir, 'tis I, if your name be sir Tunbelly Clumsey.

Sir Tun. Sir, my name 's sir Tunbelly Clumsey, whether you have any business with me or not. So you see I am not ashamed of my name—nor my face—neither.

Fash. Sir, you have no cause, that I know of.

Sir Tun. Sir, if you have no cause neither, I desire to know who you are; for till I know your name, I shall not ask you to come into my house; and when I know your name—'tis six to four I don't ask you neither.

Fash. [*Giving him a letter.*] Sir, I hope you'll find this letter an authentic passport.

Sir Tun. Cod's my life! I ask your lordship's pardon ten thousand times.—[*To a* Servant.] Here, run in a-doors quickly. Get a Scotch-coal fire in the great parlour; set all the Turkey-work chairs in their places; get the great brass candlesticks out, and be sure stick the sockets full of laurel, run!—[*Exit* Servant.] My lord, I ask your lordship's pardon.—[*To other* Servants.] And do you hear, run away to nurse, bid her let Miss Hoyden loose again, and if it was not shifting day, let her put on a clean tucker, quick!—[*Exeunt* Servants *confusedly.*] I hope your honour will excuse the disorder of my family; we are not used to receive men of your lordship's great quality every day. Pray where are your coaches, and servants, my lord?

Fash. Sir, that I might give you and your fair daughter a proof how impatient I am to be nearer akin to you, I left my equipage to follow me, and came away post with only one servant.

Sir Tun. Your lordship does me too much honour. It was exposing your person to too much fatigue and danger, I protest it was. But my daughter shall endeavour to make you what amends she can; and though I say it that should not say it—Hoyden has charms.

Fash. Sir, I am not a stranger to them, though I am to her. Common fame has done her justice.

Sir Tun. My lord, I am common fame's very grateful humble servant. My lord—my girl's young, Hoyden is young, my lord; but this I must say for her, what she wants in art, she has by nature; what she wants in experience, she has in breeding; and what's wanting in her age, is made good in her constitution. So pray, my lord, walk in: pray, my lord, walk in.

Fash. Sir, I wait upon you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A Room in the same.*

Miss Hoyden *discovered alone.*

Hoyd. Sure never nobody was used as I am. I know well enough what other girls do, for all they think to make a fool of me. It's well I have a husband a-coming, or, ecod, I'd marry the baker, I would so! Nobody can knock at the gate, but presently I must be locked up; and here's the young greyhound bitch can run loose about the house all the day long, she can; 'tis very well.

Nurse. [*Without.*] Miss Hoyden! miss! miss! miss! Miss Hoyden!

Enter Nurse.

Hoyd. Well, what do you make such a noise for, ha? what do you din a body's ears for? Can't one be at quiet for you?

Nurse. What do I din your ears for! Here's one come will din your ears for you.

Hoyd. What care I who's come? I care not a fig who comes, nor who goes, as long as I must be locked up like the ale-cellar.

Nurse. That, miss, is for fear you should be drunk before you are ripe.

Hoyd. Oh, don't you trouble your head about that; I'm as ripe as you, though not so mellow.

Nurse. Very well; now have I a good mind to lock you up again, and not let you see my lord to-night.

Hoyd. My lord! why, is my husband come?

Nurse. Yes, marry is he, and a goodly person too.

Hoyd. [*Hugging* Nurse.] O my dear nurse! forgive me this once, and I'll never misuse you again; no, if I do you shall give me three thumps on the back, and a great pinch by the cheek.

Nurse. Ah, the poor thing, see how it melts! It's as full of good-nature as an egg's full of meat.

Hoyd. But, my dear nurse, don't lie now; is he come by your troth?

Nurse. Yes, by my truly, is he.

Hoyd. O Lord! I'll go put on my laced smock, though I'm whipped till the blood run down my heels for't. [*Exit running.*

Nurse. Eh—the Lord succour thee! How thou art delighted! [*Exit after her.*

SCENE V.—*Another Room in the same.*

Enter SIR TUNBELLY *and* TOM FASHION. Servant *following with wine.*

Sir Tun. My lord, I'm proud of the honour to see your lordship within my doors; and I humbly crave leave to bid you welcome in a cup of sack wine.

Fash. Sir, to your daughter's health. [*Drinks.*

Sir Tun. Ah, poor girl, she'll be scared out of her wits on her wedding-night; for, honestly speaking, she does not know a man from a woman but by his beard and his breeches.

Fash. Sir, I don't doubt but she has a virtuous education, which with the rest of her merit makes me long to see her mine. I wish you would dispense with the canonical hour, and let it be this very night.

Sir Tun. Oh, not so soon neither! that's shooting my girl before you bid her stand. No, give her fair warning, we'll sign and seal to-night, if you please; and this day seven-night—let the jade look to her quarters.

Fash. This day se'nnight!—why, what do you take me for a ghost, sir? 'Slife, sir, I'm made of flesh and blood, and bones and sinews, and can no more live a week without your daughter—[*Aside*] than I can live a month with her.

Sir Tun. Oh, I'll warrant you, my hero; young men are hot, I know, but they don't boil over at that rate, neither. Besides, my wench's wedding-gown is not come home yet.

Fash. Oh, no matter, sir, I'll take her in her shift.—[*Aside.*] A pox of this old fellow! he'll delay the business till my damned star finds me out and discovers me.—[*Aloud.*] Pray, sir, let it be done without ceremony, 'twill save money.

Sir Tun. Money!—save money when Hoyden's to be married! Udswoons I'll give my wench a wedding-dinner, though I go to grass with the king of Assyria for't; and such a dinner it shall be, as is not to be cooked in the poaching of an egg. Therefore, my noble lord, have a little patience, we'll go and look over our deeds and settlements immediately; and as for your bride, though you may be sharp-set before she's quite ready, I'll engage for my girl she stays your stomach at last. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSEY'S *Country-House.*

Enter MISS HOYDEN *and* Nurse.

Nurse. Well, miss, how do you like your husband that is to be?

Hoyd. O Lord, nurse! I'm so overjoyed I can scarce contain myself.

Nurse. Oh, but you must have a care of being too fond; for men now-a-days hate a woman that loves 'em.

Hoyd. Love him! why do you think I love him, nurse? ecod I would not care if he were hanged, so I were but once married to him!—No—that which pleases me, is to think what work I'll make when I get to London; for when I am a wife and a lady both, nurse, ecod I'll flaunt it with the best of 'em.

Nurse. Look, look, if his honour be not a-coming again to you! Now, if I were sure you would behave yourself handsomely, and not disgrace me that have brought you up, I'd leave you alone together.

Hoyd. That's my best nurse, do as you would be done by; trust us together this once, and if I don't show my breeding from the head to the foot of me, may I be twice married, and die a maid.

Nurse. Well this once I'll venture you; but if you disparage me—

Hoyd. Never fear, I'll show him my parts, I'll warrant him.—[*Exit* Nurse.] These old women are so wise when they get a poor girl in their clutches! but ere it be long, I shall know what's what, as well as the best of 'em.

Enter TOM FASHION.

Fash. Your servant, madam; I'm glad to find you alone, for I have something of importance to speak to you about.

Hoyd. Sir (my lord, I meant), you may speak to me about what you please, I shall give you a civil answer.

Fash. You give me so obliging a one, it encourages me to tell you in few words what I think both for your interest and mine. Your father, I suppose you know, has resolved to make me happy in being your husband, and I hope I may depend upon your consent, to perform what he desires.

Hoyd. Sir, I never disobey my father in anything but eating of green gooseberries.

Fash. So good a daughter must needs be an admirable wife; I am therefore impatient till you are mine, and hope you will so far consider the violence of my love, that you won't have the cruelty to defer my happiness so long as your father designs it.

Hoyd. Pray, my lord, how long is that?

Fash. Madam, a thousand year—a whole week.

Hoyd. A week!—why I shall be an old woman by that time.

Fash. And I an old man, which you'll find a greater misfortune than t'other.

Hoyd. Why I thought it was to be to-morrow morning, as soon as I was up; I'm sure nurse told me so.

Fash. And it shall be to-morrow morning still, if you'll consent.

Hoyd. If I'll consent! Why I thought I was to obey you as my husband.

Fash. That's when we are married; till then, I am to obey you.

Hoyd. Why then if we are to take it by turns, it's the same thing; I'll obey you now, and when we are married, you shall obey me.

Fash. With all my heart; but I doubt we must get nurse on our side, or we shall hardly prevail with the chaplain.

Hoyd. No more we shan't indeed, for he loves

her better than he loves his pulpit, and would always be a preaching to her by his good will.

Fash. Why then, my dear little bedfellow, if you'll call her hither, we'll try to persuade her presently.

Hoyd. O Lord, I can tell you a way how to persuade her to anything.

Fash. How's that?

Hoyd. Why tell her she's a wholesome comely woman—and give her half-a-crown.

Fash. Nay, if that will do, she shall have half a score of 'em.

Hoyd. O gemini! for half that, she'd marry you herself. I'll run and call her. [*Exit.*

Fash. So, matters go swimmingly. This is a rare girl, i' faith; I shall have a fine time on't with her at London. I'm much mistaken if she don't prove a March hare all the year round. What a scampering chase will she make on't, when she finds the whole kennel of beaux at her tail! hey to the park, and the play, and the church, and the devil; she'll show them sport, I'll warrant 'em. But no matter, she brings an estate will afford me a separate maintenance.

Re-enter Miss Hoyden *and* Nurse.

How do you do, good mistress nurse? I desired your young lady would give me leave to see you, that I might thank you for your extraordinary care and conduct in her education; pray accept of this small acknowledgment for it at present, and depend upon my farther kindness, when I shall be that happy thing her husband.

Nurse. [*Aside.*] Gold by mackings!—[*Aloud.*] Your honour's goodness is too great; alas! all I can boast of is, I gave her pure good milk, and so your honour would have said, an you had seen how the poor thing sucked it.—Eh, God's blessing on the sweet face on't! how it used to hang at this poor teat, and suck and squeeze, and kick and sprawl it would, till the belly on't was so full, it would drop off like a leech.

Hoyd. [*Aside to* Nurse *angrily.*] Pray one word with you. Prithee nurse don't stand ripping up old stories, to make one ashamed before one's love. Do you think such a fine proper gentleman as he cares for a fiddlecome tale of a draggle-tailed girl? If you have a mind to make him have a good opinion of a woman, don't tell him what one did then, tell him what one can do now.—[*To* Tom Fashion.] I hope your honour will excuse my mismanners to whisper before you; it was only to give some orders about the family.

Fash. O everything, madam, is to give way to business! Besides, good housewifery is a very commendable quality in a young lady.

Hoyd. Pray, sir, are the young ladies good housewives at London town? Do they darn their own linen?

Fash. O no, they study how to spend money, not to save it.

Hoyd. Ecod, I don't know but that may be better sport than t'other; ha, nurse?

Fash. Well, you shall have your choice when you come there.

Hoyd. Shall I!—then by my troth I'll get there as fast as I can.—[*To* Nurse.] His honour desires you'll be so kind as to let us be married to-morrow

Nurse. To-morrow, my dear madam?

Fash. Yes, to-morrow, sweet nurse, privately; young folks, you know, are impatient, and sir Tunbelly would make us stay a week for a wedding dinner. Now all things being signed and sealed, and agreed, I fancy there could be no great harm in practising a scene or two of matrimony in private, if it were only to give us the better assurance when we come to play it in public.

Nurse. Nay, I must confess stolen pleasures are sweet; but if you should be married now, what will you do when sir Tunbelly calls for you to be wedded?

Hoyd. Why then we'll be married again.

Nurse. What, twice, my child?

Hoyd. Ecod, I don't care how often I'm married, not I.

Fash. Pray, nurse, don't you be against your young lady's good, for by this means she'll have the pleasure of two wedding-days.

Hoyd. [*To* Nurse *softly.*] And of two wedding-nights too, nurse.

Nurse. Well, I'm such a tender-hearted fool, I find I can refuse nothing; so you shall e'en follow your own inventions.

Hoyd. Shall I!—[*Aside.*] O Lord, I could leap over the moon!

Fash. Dear nurse, this goodness of yours shan't go unrewarded; but now you must employ your power with Mr. Bull the chaplain, that he may do us his friendly office too, and then we shall all be happy: do you think you can prevail with him?

Nurse. Prevail with him!—or he shall never prevail with me, I can tell him that.

Hoyd. My lord, she has had him upon the hip this seven year.

Fash. I'm glad to hear it; however to strengthen your interest with him, you may let him know I have several fat livings in my gift, and that the first that falls shall be in your disposal.

Nurse. Nay, then I'll make him marry more folks than one, I'll promise him.

Hoyd. Faith do, nurse, make him marry you too, I'm sure he'll do't for a fat living: for he loves eating more than he loves his Bible; and I have often heard him say, a fat living was the best meat in the world.

Nurse. Ay, and I'll make him commend the sauce too, or I'll bring his gown to a cassock, I will so.

Fash. Well, nurse, whilst you go and settle matters with him, then your lady and I will go and take a walk in the garden.

Nurse. I'll do your honour's business in the catching up of a garter. [*Exit.*

Fash. [*Giving her his hand.*] Come, madam, dare you venture yourself along with me?

Hoyd. O dear, yes, sir, I don't think you'll do anything to me I need be afraid on. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—Loveless's *Lodgings.*

Enter Amanda *and* Berinthia.

SONG.

I smile at Love and all its arts,
  The charming Cynthia cried:
Take heed, for Love has piercing darts,
  A wounded swain replied.
Once free and blest as you are now,
  I trifled with his charms,
I pointed at his little bow,
  And sported with his arms:

Till urged too far, Revenge! he cries,
A fatal shaft he drew,
It took its passage through your eyes,
And to my heart it flew.

To tear it thence I tried in vain,
To strive I quickly found
Was only to increase the pain,
And to enlarge the wound.
Ah! much too well, I fear, you know
What pain I'm to endure,
Since what your eyes alone could do,
Your heart alone can cure.
And that (grant Heaven I may mistake!)
I doubt is doom'd to bear
A burden for another's sake,
Who ill rewards its care.

Aman. Well, now, Berinthia, I'm at leisure to hear what 'twas you had to say to me.

Ber. What I had to say was only to echo the sighs and groans of a dying lover.

Aman. Phu! will you never learn to talk in earnest of anything?

Ber. Why this shall be in earnest, if you please: for my part, I only tell you matter of fact, you may take it which way you like best; but if you'll follow the women of the town, you'll take it both ways; for when a man offers himself to one of them, first she takes him in jest, and then she takes him in earnest.

Aman. I'm sure there's so much jest and earnest in what you say to me, I scarce know how to take it; but I think you have bewitched me, for I don't find it possible to be angry with you, say what you will.

Ber. I'm very glad to hear it, for I have no mind to quarrel with you, for some reasons that I'll brag of; but quarrel or not, smile or frown, I must tell you what I have suffered upon your account.

Aman. Upon my account!

Ber. Yes, upon yours; I have been forced to sit still and hear you commended for two hours together, without one compliment to myself; now don't you think a woman had a blessed time of that?

Aman. Alas! I should have been unconcerned at it; I never knew where the pleasure lay of being praised by the men. But pray who was this that commended me so?

Ber. One you have a mortal aversion to, Mr. Worthy; he used you like a text, he took you all to pieces, but spoke so learnedly upon every point, one might see the spirit of the church was in him. If you are a woman, you'd have been in an ecstacy to have heard how feelingly he handled your hair, your eyes, your nose, your mouth, your teeth, your tongue, your chin, your neck, and so forth. Thus he preached for an hour, but when he came to use an application, he observed that all these without a gallant were nothing.—Now consider of what has been said, and Heaven give you grace to put it in practice.

Aman. Alas! Berinthia, did I incline to a gallant (which you know I do not,) do you think a man so nice as he could have the least concern for such a plain unpolished thing as I am? it is impossible!

Ber. Now have you a great mind to put me upon commending you.

Aman. Indeed that was not my design.

Ber. Nay, if it were, it's all one, for I won't do't, I'll leave that to your looking-glass. But to show you I have some good-nature left, I'll commend him, and may be that may do as well.

Aman. You have a great mind to persuade me I am in love with him.

Ber. I have a great mind to persuade you, you don't know what you are in love with.

Aman. I am sure I am not in love with him, nor never shall be, so let that pass. But you were saying something you would commend him for.

Ber. Oh! you'd be glad to hear a good character of him, however.

Aman. Psha!

Ber. Psha!—Well 'tis a foolish undertaking for women in these kind of matters to pretend to deceive one another.—Have not I been bred a woman as well as you?

Aman. What then!

Ber. Why then I understand my trade so well, that whenever I am told of a man I like, I cry, psha! But that I may spare you the pains of putting me a second time in mind to commend him, I'll proceed, and give you this account of him: That though 'tis possible he may have had women with as good faces as your ladyship's, (no discredit to it neither,) yet you must know your cautious behaviour, with that reserve in your humour, has given him his death's wound; he mortally hates a coquette. He says 'tis impossible to love where we cannot esteem; and that no woman can be esteemed by a man who has sense, if she makes herself cheap in the eye of a fool; that pride to a woman is as necessary as humility to a divine; and that far-fetched, and dear-bought, is meat for gentlemen as well as for ladies;—in short, that every woman who has beauty may set a price upon herself, and that by under-selling the market, they ruin the trade. This is his doctrine, how do you like it?

Aman. So well, that since I never intend to have a gallant for myself, if I were to recommend one to a friend he should be the man.

Enter WORTHY.

Bless me! he's here, pray Heaven he did not hear me.

Ber. If he did, it won't hurt your reputation; your thoughts are as safe in his heart as in your own.

Wor. I venture in at an unseasonable time of night, ladies; I hope, if I am troublesome, you'll use the same freedom in turning me out again.

Aman. I believe it can't be late, for Mr. Loveless is not come home yet, and he usually keeps good hours.

Wor. Madam, I'm afraid he'll transgress a little to-night; for he told me about half an hour ago he was going to sup with some company he doubted would keep him out till three or four o'clock in the morning, and desired I would let my servant acquaint you with it, that you might not expect him: but my fellow's a blunder-head; so lest he should make some mistake, I thought it my duty to deliver the message myself.

Aman. I'm very sorry he should give you that trouble, sir: but—

Ber. But since he has, will you give me leave, madam, to keep him to play at ombre with us?

Aman. Cousin, you know you command my house.

Wor. [*To* BERINTHIA.] And, madam, you know you command me, though I am a very wretched gamester.

Ber. Oh! you play well enough to lose your money, and that's all the ladies require; so without any more ceremony, let us go into the next room and call for the cards.

Aman. With all my heart.

[*Exit* WORTHY, *leading* AMANDA.

Ber. Well, how this business will end Heaven knows; but she seems to me to be in as fair a way—as a boy is to be a rogue, when he's put clerk to an attorney. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—BERINTHIA'S *Apartment.*

Enter LOVELESS *cautiously in the dark.*

Love. So, thus far all's well. I'm got into her bedchamber, and I think nobody has perceived me steal into the house; my wife don't expect me home till four o'clock; so, if Berinthia comes to bed by eleven, I shall have a chase of five hours. Let me see, where shall I hide myself? Under her bed? No; we shall have her maid searching there for something or other; her closet's a better place, and I have a master-key will open it. I'll e'en in there, and attack her just when she comes to her prayers, that's the most like to prove her critical minute, for then the devil will be there to assist me. [*Retires into the closet, shutting the door after him.*

Enter BERINTHIA, *with a candle in her hand.*

Ber. Well, sure I am the best-natured woman in the world, I that love cards so well (there is but one thing upon the earth I love better), have pretended letters to write, to give my friends a *tête-à-tête:* however, I'm innocent, for picquet is the game I set 'em to: at her own peril be it, if she ventures to play with him at any other. But now what shall I do with myself? I don't know how in the world to pass my time; would Loveless were here to *badiner* a little! Well, he's a charming fellow; I don't wonder his wife's so fond of him. What if I should sit down and think of him till I fall asleep, and dream of the Lord knows what? Oh, but then if I should dream we were married, I should be frighted out of my wits!—[*Seeing a book.*] What's this book? I think I had best go read. O splenetic! it's a sermon. Well, I'll go into my closet and read the Plotting Sisters.—[*She opens the closet, sees* LOVELESS, *and shrieks out.*] O Lord, a ghost! a ghost! a ghost! a ghost!

Re-enter LOVELESS, *running to her.*

Love. Peace, my dear, it's no ghost; take it in your arms, you'll find 'tis worth a hundred of 'em.

Ber. Run in again; here's somebody coming.

[LOVELESS *retires as before.*

Enter ABIGAIL.

Abig. O Lord, madam! what's the matter?

Ber. O Heavens! I'm almost frighted out of my wits; I thought verily I had seen a ghost, and 'twas nothing but the white curtain, with a black hood pinned up against it: you may begone again; I am the fearfullest fool! [*Exit* ABIGAIL.

Re-enter LOVELESS.

Love. Is the coast clear?

Ber. The coast clear! I suppose you are clear, you'd never play such a trick as this else.

Love. I am very well pleased with my trick thus far, and shall be so till I have played it out, if it ben't your fault. Where's my wife?

Ber. At cards.

Love. With whom?

Ber. With Worthy.

Love. Then we are safe enough.

Ber. You are so! Some husbands would be of another mind, if he were at cards with their wives.

Love. And they'd be in the right on't, too: but I dare trust mine.—Besides, I know he's in love in another place, and he's not one of those who court half-a-dozen at a time.

Ber. Nay, the truth on't is, you'd pity him if you saw how uneasy he is at being engaged with us; but 'twas my malice, I fancied he was to meet his mistress somewhere else, so did it to have the pleasure of seeing him fret.

Love. What says Amanda to my staying abroad so late?

Ber. Why, she's as much out of humour as he; I believe they wish one another at the devil.

Love. Then I'm afraid they'll quarrel at play, and soon throw up the cards.—[*Offering to pull her into the closet.*] Therefore, my dear, charming angel, let us make good use of our time.

Ber. Heavens! what do you mean?

Love. Pray what do you think I mean?

Ber. I don't know.

Love. I'll show you.

Ber. You may as well tell me.

Love. No, that would make you blush worse than t'other.

Ber. Why, do you intend to make me blush?

Love. Faith I can't tell that; but if I do, it shall be in the dark. [*Pulling her.*

Ber. O Heavens! I would not be in the dark with you for all the world!

Love. I'll try that. [*Puts out the candle.*

Ber. O Lord! are you mad? What shall I do for light?

Love. You'll do as well without it.

Ber. Why, one can't find a chair to sit down.

Love. Come into the closet, madam, there's moonshine upon the couch.

Ber. Nay, never pull, for I will not go.

Love. Then you must be carried.

[*Takes her in his arms.*

Ber. [*Very softly.*] Help! help! I'm ravished! ruined! undone! O Lord, I shall never be able to bear it! [*Exit* LOVELESS, *carrying* BERINTHIA.

SCENE IV.—*A Room in* Sir TUNBELLY CLUMSEY'S *House.*

Enter Miss HOYDEN, Nurse, TOM FASHION, *and* BULL.

Fash. This quick despatch of yours, Mr. Bull, I take so kindly, it shall give you a claim to my favour as long as I live, I do assure you.

Hoyd. And to mine, too, I promise you.

Bull. I most humbly thank your honours; and I hope, since it has been my lot to join you in the holy bands of wedlock, you will so well cultivate the soil, which I have craved a blessing on, that your children may swarm about you like bees about a honeycomb.

Hoyd. Ecod, with all my heart; the more the merrier, I say; ha, nurse!

Enter LORY; *he takes his master hastily aside.*

Lory. One word with you, for Heaven's sake!

Fash. What the devil's the matter?

Lory. Sir, your fortune's ruined; and I don't think your life's worth a quarter of an hour's purchase. Yonder's your brother arrived with two coaches and six horses, twenty footmen and pages, a coat worth four-score pound, and a periwig down to his knees: so judge what will become of your lady's heart.

Fash. Death and furies! 'tis impossible!

Lory. Fiends and spectres! sir, 'tis true.

Fash. Is he in the house yet?

Lory. No, they are capitulating with him at the gate. The porter tells him he's come to run away with Miss Hoyden, and has cocked the blunderbuss at him; your brother swears Gad damme, they are a parcel of clawns, and he has a good mind to break off the match; but they have given the word for sir Tunbelly, so I doubt all will come out presently. Pray, sir, resolve what you'll do this moment, for egad they'll maul you.

Fash. Stay a little.—[*To* MISS HOYDEN.] My dear, here's a troublesome business my man tells me of, but don't be frightened, we shall be too hard for the rogue. Here's an impudent fellow at the gate (not knowing I was come hither *incognito*) has taken my name upon him, in hopes to run away with you.

Hoyd. O the brazen-faced varlet, it's well we are married, or maybe we might never have been so.

Fash. [*Aside.*] Egad, like enough!—[*Aloud.*] Prithee, dear doctor, run to sir Tunbelly, and stop him from going to the gate before I speak with him.

Bull. I fly, my good lord. [*Exit.*

Nurse. An't please your honour, my lady and I had best lock ourselves up till the danger be over.

Fash. Ay, by all means.

Hoyd. Not so fast, I won't be locked up any more. I'm married.

Fash. Yes, pray my dear do, till we have seized this rascal.

Hoyd. Nay, if you pray me, I'll do anything.

[*Exeunt* MISS HOYDEN *and* NURSE.

Fash. Oh! here's Sir Tunbelly coming.—Hark you, sirrah, things are better than you imagine; the wedding's over.

Lory. The devil it is, sir!

Fash. Not a word, all's safe: but sir Tunbelly don't know it, nor must not yet; so I am resolved to brazen the business out, and have the pleasure of turning the impostor upon his lordship, which I believe may easily be done.

Enter SIR TUNBELLY, BULL, *and* Servants, *armed.*

Fash. Did you ever hear, sir, of so impudent an undertaking?

Sir Tun. Never, by the mass! But we'll tickle him, I'll warrant him.

Fash. They tell me, sir, he has a great many people with him disguised like servants.

Sir Tun. Ay, ay, rogues enough; but I'll soon raise the posse upon 'em.

Fash. Sir, if you'll take my advice, we'll go a shorter way to work. I find whoever this spark is, he knows nothing of my being privately here; so if you pretend to receive him civilly, he'll enter without suspicion; and as soon as he is within the gate, we'll whip up the drawbridge upon his back, let fly the blunderbuss to disperse his crew, and so commit him to jail.

Sir Tun. 'Egad, your lordship is an ingenious person, and a very great general; but shall we kill any of 'em or not?

Fash. No, no; fire over their heads only to fright 'em; I'll warrant the regiment scours when the colonel's a prisoner.

Sir Tun. Then come along, my boys, and let your courage be great—for your danger is but small.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*The Gate before* SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSEY'S *House.*

Enter LORD FOPPINGTON, *with* LA VEROLE *and* Servants.

Lord Fop. A pax of these bumkinly people! will they open the gate, or do they desire I should grow at their moat-side like a willow?—[*To the* Porter.] Hey, fellow—prithee do me the favour, in as few words as thou canst find to express thyself, to tell me whether thy master will admit me or not, that I may turn about my coach, and be gone.

Porter. Here's my master himself now at hand, he's of age, he'll give you his answer.

Enter SIR TUNBELLY *and* Servants.

Sir Tun. My most noble lord, I crave your pardon for making your honour wait so long; but my orders to my servants have been to admit nobody without my knowledge, for fear of some attempts upon my daughter, the times being full of plots and roguery.

Lord Fop. Much caution, I must confess, is a sign of great wisdom: but stap my vitals, I have got a cold enough to destroy a porter!—He, hem—

Sir Tun. I am very sorry for't, indeed, my lord; but if your lordship please to walk in, we'll help you to some brown sugar-candy. My lord, I'll show you the way.

Lord Fop. Sir, I follow you with pleasure.

[*Exit with* SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSEY. *As* LA VEROLE *and the rest are about to follow him in, the* Servants *within clap the door against them.*

Servants. [*Within.*] Nay, hold you me, there sir.

La Ver. Jernie, qu'est-ce que veut dire ça?

Sir Tun. [*Within.*] Fire, porter.

Porter. [*Fires.*] Have among you, my masters.

La Ver. Ah, je suis mort!—

[*Runs off with the rest.*

Porter. Not one soldier left by the mass!

SCENE VI.—*A Hall in the same.*

Enter SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSEY, BULL, Constable, Clerk, *and* Servants, *with* LORD FOPPINGTON, *disarmed.*

Sir Tun. Come, bring him along, bring him along!

Lord Fop. What the pax do you mean, gentlemen! Is it fair-time, that you are all drunk before dinner?

Sir Tun. Drunk, sirrah!—Here's an impudent rogue for you!—Drunk or sober, bully, I'm a justice of the peace, and know how to deal with strollers.

Lord Fop. Strollers!

Sir Tun. Ay, strollers. Come, give an account

of yourself; what's your name, where do you live? do you pay scot and lot? are you a Williamite, or a Jacobite? Come.

Lord Fop. And why dost thou ask me so many impertinent questions?

Sir Tun. Because I'll make you answer 'em before I have done with you, you rascal, you!

Lord Fop. Before Gad, all the answer I can make thee to 'em, is, that thou art a very extraordinary old fellow; stap my vitals!

Sir Tun. Nay, if you are for joking with deputy lieutenants, we know how to deal with you.—[*To* Clerk.] Here, draw a warrant for him immediately.

Lord Fop. A warrant!—What the devil is't thou wouldst be at, old gentleman?

Sir Tun. I would be at you, sirrah, (if my hands were not tied as a magistrate,) and with these two double fists beat your teeth down your throat, you dog you!

Lord Fop. And why wouldst thou spoil my face at that rate?

Sir Tun. For your design to rob me of my daughter, villain.

Lord Fop. Rab thee of thy daughter!—Now I do begin to believe I am a-bed and a-sleep, and that all this is but a dream.—If it be, 'twill be an agreeable surprise enough, to waken by and by; and instead of the impertinent company of a nasty country justice, find myself perhaps in the arms of a woman of quality—[*To* Sir TUNBELLY.] Prithee, old father, wilt thou give me leave to ask thee one question?

Sir Tun. I can't tell whether I will or not, till I know what it is.

Lord Fop. Why, then it is, whether thou didst not write to my Lord Foppington to come down and marry thy daughter?

Sir Tun. Yes, marry did I; and my Lord Foppington is come down, and shall marry my daughter before she's a day older.

Lord Fop. Now give me thy hand, dear dad; I thought we should understand one another at last.

Sir Tun. This fellow's mad.—Here, bind him hand and foot. [Servants *bind him down.*

Lord Fop. Nay, prithee, knight, leave fooling; thy jest begins to grow dull.

Sir Tun. Bind him, I say, he's mad.—Bread and water, a dark room and a whip may bring him to his senses again.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] Egad! if I don't waken quickly, by all I can see, this is like to prove one of the most impertinent dreams that ever I dreamt in my life.

Enter MISS HOYDEN *and* NURSE.

Hoyd. [*Going up to him.*] Is this he that would have run away with me? Fo! how he stinks of sweets!—Pray, father, let him be dragged through the horse-pond.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] This must be my wife by her natural inclination to her husband.

Hoyd. Pray, father, what do you intend to do with him? hang him?

Sir Tun. That at least, child.

Nurse. Ay, and it's e'en too good for him too.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] Madame la governante, I presume. Hitherto this appears to me to be one of the most extraordinary families that ever man of quality matched into.

Sir Tun. What's become of my lord, daughter?

Hoyd. He's just coming, sir.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] My lord! what does he mean by that now?

Enter TOM FASHION *and* LORY.

[*Aloud.*] Stap my vitals, Tam! now the dream's out.

Fash. Is this the fellow, sir, that designed to trick me of your daughter?

Sir Tun. This is he, my lord, how do you like him? Is not he a pretty fellow to get a fortune?

Fash. I find by his dress he thought your daughter might be taken with a beau.

Hoyd. O gemini! Is this a beau? let me see him again.—Ha! I find a beau's no such ugly thing neither.

Fash. [*Aside.*] Egad, she'll be in love with him presently; I'll e'en have him sent away to jail.—[*To* Lord FOPPINGTON.] Sir, though your undertaking shows you are a person of no extraordinary modesty, I suppose you han't confidence enough to expect much favour from me?

Lord Fop. Strike me dumb, Tam, thou art a very impudent fellow!

Nurse. Look, if the varlet has not the frontery to call his lordship plain Thomas!

Bull. The business is, he would feign himself mad, to avoid going to jail.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] That must be the chaplain by his unfolding of mysteries.

Sir Tun. Come, is the warrant writ?

Clerk. Yes, sir.

Sir Tun. Give me the pen, I'll sign it.—So, now, constable, away with him.

Lord Fop. Hold one moment, pray, gentlemen.—My Lord Foppington, shall I beg one word with your lordship?

Nurse. O ho, is't my lord with him now? See how afflictions will humble folks.

Hoyd. Pray, my lord, don't let him whisper too close, lest he bite your ear off.

Lord Fop. I am not altogether so hungry as your ladyship is pleased to imagine.—[*Aside to* TOM FASHION.] Look you, Tam, I am sensible I have not been so kind to you as I ought, but I hope you'll forget what's past, and accept of the five thousand pounds I offer; thou mayst live in extreme splendour with it, stap my vitals!

Fash. It's a much easier matter to prevent a disease than to cure it; a quarter of that sum would have secured your mistress; twice as much won't redeem her. [*Leaving him.*

Sir Tun. Well, what says he?

Fash. Only the rascal offered me a bribe to let him go.

Sir Tun. Ay, he shall go, with a pox to him!—Lead on, constable.

Lord Fop. One word more, and I have done.

Sir Tun. Before Gad! thou art an impudent fellow, to trouble the court at this rate after thou art condemned; but speak once for all.

Lord Fop. Why, then, once for all; I have at last luckily called to mind that there is a gentleman of this country, who I believe cannot live far from this place, if he were here, would satisfy you, I am Navelty, baron of Foppington, with five thousand pounds a year, and that fellow there a rascal, not worth a groat.

Sir Tun. Very well; now, who is this honest gentleman you are so well acquainted with?—

[*To* TOM FASHION.] Come, sir, we shall hamper him.

Lord Fop. 'Tis sir John Friendly.

Sir Tun. So; he lives within half a mile, and came down into the country but last night; this bold-faced fellow thought he had been at London still, and so quoted him; now we shall display him in his colours: I'll send for Sir John immediately.—[*To a* Servant.] Here, fellow, away presently, and desire my neighbour he'll do me the favour to step over, upon an extraordinary occasion.—[*Exit* Servant.] And in the meanwhile you had best secure this sharper in the gate-house.

Constable. An't please your worship, he may chance to give us the slip thence. If I were worthy to advise, I think the dog-kennel's a surer place.

Sir Tun. With all my heart; anywhere.

Lord Fop. Nay, for Heaven's sake, sir! do me the favour to put me in a clean room, that I mayn't daub my clothes.

Sir Tun. O, when you have married my daughter, her estate will afford you new ones.—Away with him!

Lord Fop. A dirty country justice is a barbarous magistrate, stap my vitals!

[*Exit* Constable *with* LORD FOPPINGTON.

Fash. [*Aside.*] Egad, I must prevent this knight's coming, or the house will grow soon too hot to hold me.—[*To* Sir TUNBELLY.] Sir, I fancy 'tis not worth while to trouble sir John upon this impertinent fellow's desire: I'll send and call the messenger back.

Sir Tun. Nay, with all my heart; for, to be sure, he thought he was far enough off, or the rogue would never have named him.

Re-enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, I met sir John just lighting at the gate; he's come to wait upon you.

Sir Tun. Nay, then, it happens as one could wish.

Fash. [*Aside.*] The devil it does!—Lory, you see how things are, here will be a discovery presently, and we shall have our brains beat out; for my brother will be sure to swear he don't know me: therefore, run into the stable, take the two first horses you can light on, I'll slip out at the back door, and we'll away immediately.

Lory. What, and leave your lady, sir?

Fash. There's no danger in that as long as I have taken possession; I shall know how to treat with 'em well enough, if once I am out of their reach. Away! I'll steal after thee.

[*Exit* LORY; *his master follows him out at one door as* Sir JOHN FRIENDLY *is entering at the other.*

Enter Sir JOHN FRIENDLY.

Sir Tun. Sir John, you are the welcomest man alive; I had just sent a messenger to desire you'd step over, upon a very extraordinary occasion. We are all in arms here.

Sir John. How so?

Sir Tun. Why, you must know, a finical sort of a tawdry fellow here (I don't know who the devil he is, not I) hearing, I suppose, that the match was concluded between my Lord Foppington and my girl Hoyden, comes impudently to the gate, and with a whole pack of rogues in liveries, and would have passed upon me for his lordship: but what does I? I comes up to him boldly at the head of his guards, takes him by the throat, strikes up his heels, binds him hand and foot, despatches a warrant, and commits him prisoner to the dog-kennel.

Sir John. So; but how do you know but this was my lord? for I was told he set out from London the day before me, with a very fine retinue, and intended to come directly hither.

Sir Tun. Why, now to show you how many lies people raise in that damned town, he came two nights ago post, with only one servant, and is now in the house with me. But you don't know the cream of the jest yet; this same rogue, (that lies yonder neck and heels among the hounds,) thinking you were out of the country, quotes you for his acquaintance, and said if you were here, you'd justify him to be Lord Foppington, and I know not what.

Sir John. Pray will you let me see him?

Sir Tun. Ay, that you shall presently.—[*To a* Servant.] Here, fetch the prisoner.

[*Exit* Servant.

Sir John. I wish there ben't some mistake in the business.—Where's my lord? I know him very well.

Sir Tun. He was here just now.—[*To* BULL.] See for him, doctor, tell him Sir John is here to wait upon him. [*Exit* BULL.

Sir John. I hope, sir Tunbelly, the young lady is not married yet.

Sir Tun. No, things won't be ready this week. But why do you say you hope she is not married?

Sir John. Some foolish fancies only, perhaps I'm mistaken.

Re-enter BULL.

Bull. Sir, his lordship is just rid out to take the air.

Sir Tun. To take the air! Is that his London breeding, to go take the air when gentlemen come to visit him?

Sir John. 'Tis possible he might want it, he might not be well, some sudden qualm perhaps.

Re-enter Constable, *with* LORD FOPPINGTON.

Lord Fop. Stap my vitals, I'll have satisfaction!

Sir John. [*Running to him.*] My dear lord Foppington!

Lord Fop. Dear Friendly, thou art come in the critical minute, strike me dumb!

Sir John. Why, I little thought to have found you in fetters.

Lord Fop. Why truly the world must do me the justice to confess, I do use to appear a little more *dégagé*: but this old gentleman, not liking the freedom of my air, has been pleased to skewer down my arms like a rabbit.

Sir Tun. Is it then possible that this should be the true Lord Foppington at last?

Lord Fop. Why, what do you see in his face to make you doubt of it? Sir, without presuming to have any extraordinary opinion of my figure, give me leave to tell you, if you had seen as many lords as I have done, you would not think it impossible a person of a worse taille than mine might be a modern man of quality.

Sir Tun. Unbind him, slaves.—My lord, I'm struck dumb, I can only beg pardon by signs; but if a sacrifice will appease you, you shall have it.—Here, pursue this Tartar, bring him back.—Away, I say!—A dog! Oons, I'll cut off his ears and

his tail, I'll draw out all his teeth, pull his skin over his head—and—and what shall I do more?

Sir John. He does indeed deserve to be made an example of.

Lord Fop. He does deserve to be chartre, stap my vitals!

Sir Tun. May I then hope I have your honour's pardon?

Lord Fop. Sir, we courtiers do nothing without a bribe: that fair young lady might do miracles.

Sir Tun. Hoyden! come hither, Hoyden.

Lord Fop. Hoyden is her name, sir?

Sir Tun. Yes, my lord.

Lord Fop. The prettiest name for a song I ever heard.

Sir Tun. My lord—here's my girl, she's yours, she has a wholesome body, and a virtuous mind; she's a woman complete, both in flesh and in spirit; she has a bag of milled crowns, as scarce as they are, and fifteen hundred a year stitched fast to her tail.—So, go thy ways, Hoyden.

Lord Fop. Sir, I do receive her like a gentleman.

Sir Tun. Then, I'm a happy man. I bless Heaven, and if your lordship will give me leave, I will, like a good Christian at Christmas, be very drunk by way of thanksgiving. Come, my noble peer, I believe dinner's ready; if your honour pleases to follow me, I'll lead you on to the attack of a venison-pasty. [*Exit.*

Lord Fop. Sir, I wait upon you.—Will your ladyship do me the favour of your little finger, madam?

Hoyd. My lord, I'll follow you presently, I have a little business with my nurse.

Lord Fop. Your ladyship's most humble servant.—Come, sir John; the ladies have *des affaires.*

[*Exit with* SIR JOHN FRIENDLY.

Hoyd. So, nurse, we are finely brought to bed! what shall we do now?

Nurse. Ah, dear miss, we are all undone! Mr. Bull, you were used to help a woman to a remedy. [*Crying.*

Bull. A lack-a-day! but it's past my skill now, I can do nothing.

Nurse. Who would have thought that ever your invention should have been drained so dry?

Hoyd. Well, I have often thought old folks fools, and now I'm sure they are so; I have found a way myself to secure us all.

Nurse. Dear lady, what's that?

Hoyd. Why, if you two will be sure to hold your tongues, and not say a word of what's past, I'll e'en marry this lord too.

Nurse. What! two husbands, my dear?

Hoyd. Why you had three, good nurse, you may hold your tongue.

Nurse. Ay, but not altogether, sweet child.

Hoyd. Psha! if you had, you'd ne'er a thought much on't.

Nurse. Oh, but 'tis a sin, sweeting!

Bull. Nay, that's my business to speak to, nurse.—I do confess, to take two husbands for the satisfaction of the flesh, is to commit the sin of exorbitancy; but to do it for the peace of the spirit, is no more than to be drunk by way of physic. Besides, to prevent a parent's wrath, is to avoid the sin of disobedience; for when the parent 's angry, the child is froward. So that upon the whole matter, I do think, though miss should marry again, she may be saved.

Hoyd. Ecod, and I will marry again then! and so there is an end of the story. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—TOM FASHION'S *Lodgings.*

Enter COUPLER, TOM FASHION, *and* LORY.

Coup. Well, and so sir John coming in—

Fash. And so sir John coming in, I thought it might be manners in me to go out, which I did, and getting on horseback as fast as I could, rid away as if the devil had been at the rear of me. What has happened since, Heaven knows.

Coup. Egad, sirrah, I know as well as Heaven.

Fash. What do you know?

Coup. That you are a cuckold.

Fash. The devil I am! By who?

Coup. By your brother.

Fash. My brother! which way?

Coup. The old way; he has lain with your wife.

Fash. Hell and furies! what dost thou mean?

Coup. I mean plainly; I speak no parable.

Fash. Plainly! thou dost not speak common sense, I cannot understand one word thou sayest.

Coup. You will do soon, youngster. In short, you left your wife a widow, and she married again.

Fash. It's a lie.

Coup. Ecod, if I were a young fellow, I'd break your head, sirrah.

Fash. Dear dad, don't be angry, for I'm as mad as Tom of Bedlam.

Coup. When I had fitted you with a wife, you should have kept her.

Fash. But is it possible the young strumpet could play me such a trick?

Coup. A young strumpet, sir, can play twenty tricks.

Fash. But prithee instruct me a little farther; whence comes thy intelligence?

Coup. From your brother, in this letter; there, you may read it.

Fash. [*Reads.*]

DEAR COUPLER,—*I have only time to tell thee in three lines, or thereabouts, that here has been the devil. That rascal Tam, having stole the letter thou hadst formerly writ for me to bring to sir Tunbelly, formed a damnable design upon my mistress, and was in a fair way of success when I arrived. But after having suffered some indignities (in which I have all daubed my embroidered coat) I put him to flight. I sent out a party of horse after him, in hopes to have made him my prisoner, which if I had done I would have qualified him for the seraglio, stap my vitals!*

The danger I have thus narrowly escaped, has made me fortify myself against further attempts, by entering immediately into an association with

the young lady, by which we engage to stand by one another as long as we both shall live.

In short, the papers are sealed, and the contract is signed, so the business of the lawyer is achevé; but I defer the divine part of the thing till I arrive at London, not being willing to consummate in any other bed but my own.

Postscript,

'Tis possible I may be in the tawn as soon as this letter, far I find the lady is so violently in love with me, I have determined to make her happy with all the despatch that is practicable, without disardering my coach-harses.

So, here's rare work, i'faith!

Lory. Egad, Miss Hoyden has laid about her bravely!

Coup. I think my country-girl has played her part as well as if she had been born and bred in St. James's parish.

Fash. That rogue the chaplain!

Lory. And then that jade the nurse, sir!

Fash. And then that drunken sot Lory, sir! that could not keep himself sober to be a witness to the marriage.

Lory. Sir — with respect — I know very few drunken sots that do keep themselves sober.

Fash. Hold your prating, sirrah, or I'll break your head!—Dear Coupler, what's to be done?

Coup. Nothing's to be done till the bride and bridegroom come to town.

Fash. Bride and bridegroom! death and furies! I can't bear that thou shouldst call 'em so.

Coup. Why, what shall I call 'em, dog and cat?

Fash. Not for the world, that sounds more like man and wife than t'other.

Coup. Well, if you'll hear of 'em in no language, we'll leave 'em for the nurse and the chaplain.

Fash. The devil and the witch!

Coup. When they come to town—

Lory. We shall have stormy weather.

Coup. Will you hold your tongues, gentlemen, or not?

Lory. Mum!

Coup. I say when they come, we must find what stuff they are made of, whether the churchman be chiefly composed of the flesh, or the spirit; I presume the former. For as chaplains now go, 'tis probable he eats three pound of beef to the reading of one chapter.—This gives him carnal desires, he wants money, preferment, wine, a whore; therefore we must invite him to supper, give him fat capons, sack and sugar, a purse of gold, and a plump sister. Let this be done, and I'll warrant thee, my boy, he speaks truth like an oracle.

Fash. Thou are a profound statesman I allow it; but how shall we gain the nurse?

Coup. Oh! never fear the nurse, if once you have got the priest; for the devil always rides the hag. Well, there's nothing more to be said of the matter at this time, that I know of; so let us go and inquire if there's any news of our people yet, perhaps they may be come. But let me tell you one thing by the way, sirrah, I doubt you have been an idle fellow; if thou hadst behaved thyself as thou shouldst have done, the girl would never have left thee. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—Berinthia's *Apartment.*

Enter Abigail, *crossing the stage, followed by* Worthy.

Wor. Hem, Mrs. Abigail! is your mistress to be spoken with?

Abig. By you, sir, I believe she may.

Wor. Why 'tis by me I would have her spoken with.

Abig. I'll acquaint her, sir. [*Exit*

Wor. One lift more I must persuade her to give me, and then I'm mounted. Well, a young bawd, and a handsome one for my money; 'tis they do the execution; I'll never go to an old one, but when I have occasion for a witch. Lewdness looks heavenly to a woman, when an angel appears in its cause; but when a hag is advocate, she thinks it comes from the devil. An old woman has something so terrible in her looks, that whilst she is persuading your mistress to forget she has a soul, she stares hell and damnation full in her face

Enter Berinthia.

Ber. Well, sir, what news bring you?

Wor. No news, madam; there's a woman going to cuckold her husband.

Ber. Amanda!

Wor. I hope so.

Ber. Speed her well!

Wor. Ay, but there must be more than a God-speed, or your charity won't be worth a farthing.

Ber. Why, han't I done enough already?

Wor. Not quite.

Ber. What's the matter?

Wor. The lady has a scruple still, which you must remove.

Ber. What's that?

Wor. Her virtue—she says.

Ber. And do you believe her?

Wor. No, but I believe it's what she takes for her virtue; it's some relics of lawful love. She is not yet fully satisfied her husband has got another mistress; which unless I can convince her of, I have opened the trenches in vain; for the breach must be wider, before I dare storm the town.

Ber. And so I'm to be your engineer?

Wor. I'm sure you know best how to manage the battery.

Ber. What think you of springing a mine? I have a thought just now come into my head, how to blow her up at once.

Wor. That would be a thought indeed.

Ber. Faith, I'll do't; and thus the execution of it shall be. We are all invited to my lord Foppington's to-night to supper; he's come to town with his bride, and maketh a ball, with an entertainment of music. Now, you must know, my undoer here, Loveless, says he must needs meet me about some private business (I don't know what 'tis) before we go to the company. To which end he has told his wife one lie, and I have told her another. But to make her amends, I'll go immediately, and tell her a solemn truth.

Wor. What's that?

Ber. Why, I'll tell her, that to my certain knowledge her husband has a rendezvous with his mistress this afternoon; and that if she'll give me her word, she will be satisfied with the discovery, without making any violent inquiry after the woman, I'll direct her to a place where she shall see 'em

meet. Now, friend, this I fancy may help you to a critical minute. For home she must go again to dress. You (with your good breeding) come to wait upon us to the ball, find her all alone, her spirit inflamed against her husband for his treason, and her flesh in a heat from some contemplations upon the treachery, her blood on a fire, her conscience in ice; a lover to draw, and the devil to drive.—Ah, poor Amanda!

Wor. [*Kneeling.*] Thou angel of light, let me fall down and adore thee!

Ber. Thou minister of darkness, get up again, for I hate to see the devil at his devotions.

Wor. Well, my incomparable Berinthia, how shall I requite you!

Ber. Oh, ne'er trouble yourself about that: virtue is its own reward. There's a pleasure in doing good, which sufficiently pays itself. Adieu!

Wor. Farewell, thou best of women!

[*Exeunt severally.*

Enter AMANDA *meeting* BERINTHIA.

Aman. Who was that went from you?

Ber. A friend of yours.

Aman. What does he want?

Ber. Something you might spare him, and be ne'er the poorer.

Aman. I can spare him nothing but my friendship; my love already's all disposed of: though, I confess, to one ungrateful to my bounty.

Ber. Why, there's the mystery! You have been so bountiful, you have cloyed him. Fond wives do by their husbands, as barren wives do by their lapdogs; cram 'em with sweetmeats till they spoil their stomachs.

Aman. Alas! had you but seen how passionately fond he has been since our last reconciliation, you would have thought it were impossible he ever should have breathed an hour without me.

Ber. Ay, but there you thought wrong again, Amanda; you should consider, that in matters of love men's eyes are always bigger than their bellies. They have violent appetites, 'tis true, but they have soon dined.

Aman. Well; there's nothing upon earth astonishes me more than men's inconstancy.

Ber. Now there's nothing upon earth astonishes me less, when I consider what they and we are composed of: for nature has made them children, and us babies. Now, Amanda, how we used our babies you may remember. We were mad to have them as soon as we saw them; kissed them to pieces as soon as we got them; then pulled off their clothes, saw them naked, and so threw them away.

Aman. But do you think all men are of this temper?

Ber. All but one.

Aman. Who's that?

Ber. Worthy.

Aman. Why, he's weary of his wife too, you see.

Ber. Ay, that's no proof.

Aman. What can be a greater?

Ber. Being weary of his mistress.

Aman. Don't you think 'twere possible he might give you that too?

Ber. Perhaps he might, if he were my gallant; not if he were yours.

Aman. Why do you think he should be more constant to me than he would to you? I'm sure I'm not so handsome.

Ber. Kissing goes by favour; he likes you best.

Aman. Suppose he does: that's no demonstration he would be constant to me.

Ber. No, that I'll grant you: but there are other reasons to expect it. For you must know after all, Amanda, the inconstancy we commonly see in men of brains, does not so much proceed from the uncertainty of their temper, as from the misfortunes of their love. A man sees perhaps a hundred women he likes well enough for an intrigue, and away; but possibly, through the whole course of his life, does not find above one who is exactly what he could wish her: now her, 'tis a thousand to one, he never gets. Either she is not to be had at all (though that seldom happens, you'll say), or he wants those opportunities that are necessary to gain her; either she likes somebody else much better than him, or uses him like a dog, because he likes nobody so well as her. Still something or other Fate claps in the way between them and the women they are capable of being fond of: and this makes them wander about from mistress to mistress, like a pilgrim from town to town, who every night must have a fresh lodging, and's in haste to be gone in the morning.

Aman. 'Tis possible there may be something in what you say; but what do you infer from it as to the man we are talking of?

Ber. Why, I infer, that you being the woman in the world the most to his humour, 'tis not likely he would quit you for one that is less.

Aman. That is not to be depended upon, for you see Mr. Loveless does so.

Ber. What does Mr. Loveless do?

Aman. Why, he runs after something for variety I'm sure he does not like so well as he does me.

Ber. That's more than you know, madam.

Aman. No, I'm sure on't. I am not very vain, Berinthia, and yet I'll lay my life, if I could look into his heart, he thinks I deserve to be preferred to a thousand of her.

Ber. Don't be too positive in that neither; a million to one but she has the same opinion of you. What would you give to see her?

Aman. Hang her, dirty trull!—Though I really believe she's so ugly she'd cure me of my jealousy.

Ber. All the men of sense about town say she's handsome.

Aman. They are as often out in those things as any people.

Ber. Then I'll give you further proof—all the women about town say she's a fool. Now I hope you're convinced?

Aman. Whate'er she be, I'm satisfied he does not like her well enough to bestow anything more than a little outward gallantry upon her.

Ber. Outward gallantry!—[*Aside.*] I can't bear this.—[*Aloud.*] Don't you think she's a woman to be fobbed off so. Come, I'm too much your friend to suffer you should be thus grossly imposed upon by a man who does not deserve the least part about you, unless he knew how to set a greater value upon it. Therefore, in one word, to my certain knowledge, he is to meet her now, within a quarter of an hour, somewhere about that Babylon of wickedness, Whitehall. And if you'll give me your word, that you'll be content with

seeing her masked in his hand, without pulling her headclothes off, I'll step immediately to the person from whom I have my intelligence, and send you word whereabouts you may stand to see 'em meet. My friend and I'll watch 'em from another place, and dodge 'em to their private lodging; but don't you offer to follow 'em, lest you do it awkwardly, and spoil all. I'll come home to you again as soon as I have earthed 'em, and give you an account in what corner of the house the scene of their lewdness lies.

Aman. If you can do this, Berinthia, he's a villain.

Ber. I can't help that; men will be so.

Aman. Well, I'll follow your directions, for I shall never rest till I know the worst of this matter.

Ber. Pray, go immediately and get yourself ready then. Put on some of your woman's clothes, a great scarf and a mask, and you shall presently receive orders.—[*Calls.*] Here, who's there? get me a chair quickly.

Enter Servant.

Ser. There are chairs at the door, madam.

Ber. 'Tis well; I'm coming. [*Exit* Servant.

Aman. But pray, Berinthia, before you go, tell me how I may know this filthy thing, if she should be so forward (as I suppose she will) to come to the rendezvous first; for methinks I would fain view her a little.

Ber. Why, she's about my height; and very well shaped.

Aman. I thought she had been a little crooked?

Ber. O no, she's as straight as I am. But we lose time; come away. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—Tom Fashion's *Lodgings.*

Enter Tom Fashion, *meeting* Lory.

Fash. Well, will the doctor come?

Lory. Sir, I sent a porter to him as you ordered me. He found him with a pipe of tobacco and a great tankard of ale, which he said he would despatch while I could tell three, and be here.

Fash. He does not suspect 'twas I that sent for him?

Lory. Not a jot, sir; he divines as little for himself as he does for other folks.

Fash. Will he bring nurse with him?

Lory. Yes.

Fash. That's well; where's Coupler?

Lory. He's half way up the stairs taking breath; he must play his bellows a little, before he can get to the top.

Enter Coupler.

Fash. Oh here he is.—Well, Old Phthisic, the doctor's coming.

Coup. Would the pox had the doctor!—I'm quite out of wind.—[*To* Lory.] Set me a chair, sirrah. Ah!—[*Sits down.*]—[*To* Tom Fashion.] Why the plague canst not thou lodge upon the ground-floor?

Fash. Because I love to lie as near heaven as I can.

Coup. Prithee, let heaven alone; ne'er affect tending that way: thy centre's downwards.

Fash. That's impossible! I have too much ill luck in this world to be damned in the next.

Coup. Thou art out in thy logic. Thy major is true, but thy minor is false; for thou art the luckiest fellow in the universe.

Fash. Make out that.

Coup. I'll do't: last night the devil ran away with the parson of Fatgoose living.

Fash. If he had run away with the parish too, what's that to me?

Coup. I'll tell thee what it's to thee.—This living is worth five hundred pounds a-year, and the presentation of it is thine, if thou canst prove thyself a lawful husband to Miss Hoyden.

Fash. Sayest thou so, my protector? Then, egad, I shall have a brace of evidences here presently.

Coup. The nurse and the doctor?

Fash. The same. The devil himself won't have interest enough to make 'em withstand it.

Coup. That we shall see presently.—Here they come.

Enter Nurse *and* Bull; *they start back, seeing* Tom Fashion.

Nurse. Ah, goodness, Roger, we are betrayed!

Fash. [*Laying hold of them.*] Nay, nay, ne'er flinch for the matter, for I have you safe.—Come to your trials immediately; I have no time to give you copies of your indictment. There sits your judge.

Both. [*Kneeling.*] Pray, sir, have compassion on us.

Nurse. I hope, sir, my years will move your pity; I am an aged woman.

Coup. That is a moving argument indeed.—[*To* Bull.] Are not you a rogue of sanctity?

Bull. Sir (with respect to my function), I do wear a gown. I hope, sir, my character will be considered; I am Heaven's ambassador.

Coup. Did not you marry this vigorous young fellow to a plump young buxom wench?

Nurse. [*Aside to* Bull.] Don't confess, Roger, unless you are hard put to it indeed.

Coup. Come, out with't!—Now is he chewing the cud of his roguery, and grinding a lie between his teeth.

Bull. Sir, I cannot positively say—I say, sir, positively I cannot say—

Coup. Come, no equivocation, no Roman turns upon us. Consider thou standest upon protestant ground, which will slip from under thee like a Tyburn cart; for in this country we have always ten hangmen for one Jesuit.

Bull. [*To* Tom Fashion.] Pray, sir, then will you but permit me to speak one word in private with nurse?

Fash. Thou art always for doing something in private with nurse.

Coup. But pray let his betters be served before him for once: I would do something in private with her myself.—Lory, take care of this reverend gownman in the next room a little.—Retire, priest.—[*Exit* Lory *with* Bull.] Now, virgin, I must put the matter home to you a little: do you think it might not be possible to make you speak truth?

Nurse. Alas, sir! I don't know what you mean by truth.

Coup. Nay, 'tis possible thou mayest be a stranger to it.

Fash. Come, nurse, you and I were better friends when we saw one another last; and I still believe you are a very good woman in the bottom. I did deceive you and your young lady, 'tis true,

but I always designed to make a very good husband to her, and to be a very good friend to you. And 'tis possible, in the end, she might have found herself happier, and you richer, than ever my brother will make you.

Nurse. Brother! why is your worship then his lordship's brother?

Fash. I am; which you should have known, if I durst have stayed to have told you; but I was forced to take horse a little in haste, you know.

Nurse. You were indeed, sir: poor young man, how he was bound to scaure for't! Now won't your worship be angry, if I confess the truth to you?—When I found you were a cheat (with respect be it spoken), I verily believed miss had got some pitiful skip-jack varlet or other to her husband, or I had ne'er let her think of marrying again.

Coup. But where was your conscience all this while, woman? did not that stare you in the face with huge saucer-eyes, and a great horn upon the forehead? Did not you think you should be damned for such a sin?—Ha!

Fash. Well said, divinity! press that home upon her.

Nurse. Why, in good truly, sir, I had some fearful thoughts on't, and could never be brought to consent, till Mr. Bull said it was a peckadilla, and he'd secure my soul for a tithe-pig.

Fash. There was a rogue for you!

Coup. And he shall thrive accordingly; he shall have a good living.—Come, honest nurse, I see you have butter in your compound; you can melt. Some compassion you can have of this handsome young fellow.

Nurse. I have, indeed, sir.

Fash. Why, then I'll tell you what you shall do for me. You know what a warm living here is fallen; and that it must be in the disposal of him who has the disposal of miss. Now if you and the doctor will agree to prove my marriage, I'll present him to it, upon condition he makes you his bride.

Nurse. Naw the blessing of the Lord follow your good worship both by night and by day!—Let him be fetched in by the ears; I'll soon bring his nose to the grindstone.

Coup. [*Aside.*] Well said, old white-leather!—[*Aloud.*] Hey, bring in the prisoner there!

Re-enter Lory *with* Bull.

Coup. Come, advance, holy man. Here's your duck does not think fit to retire with you into the chancel at this time; but she has a proposal to make to you in the face of the congregation.—Come, nurse, speak for yourself, you are of age.

Nurse. Roger, are not you a wicked man, Roger, to set your strength against a weak woman, and persuade her it was no sin to conceal miss's nuptials? My conscience flies in my face for it, thou priest of Baal! and I find by woful experience thy absolution is not worth an old cassock; therefore I am resolved to confess the truth to the whole world, though I die a beggar for it. But his worship overflows with his mercy and his bounty; he is not only pleased to forgive us our sins, but designs thou sha't squat thee down in Fatgoose living; and which is more than all, has prevailed with me to become the wife of thy bosom.

Fash. All this I intend for you, doctor. What you are to do for me I need not tell ye.

Bull. Your worship's goodness is unspeakable. Yet there is one thing seems a point of conscience; and conscience is a tender babe. If I should bind myself, for the sake of this living, to marry nurse, and maintain her afterwards, I doubt it might be looked on as a kind of simony.

Coup. [*Rising up.*] If it were sacrilege, the living's worth it: therefore no more words, good doctor; but with the parish—[*Giving* Nurse *to him*] here—take the parsonage-house. 'Tis true, 'tis a little out of repair; some dilapidations there are to be made good; the windows are broke, the wainscot is warped, the ceilings are peeled, and the walls are cracked; but a little glazing, painting, whitewash, and plaster, will make it last thy time.

Bull. Well, sir, if it must be so, I shan't contend. What Providence orders, I submit to.

Nurse. And so do I, with all humility.

Coup. Why, that now was spoke like good people. Come, my turtle-doves, let us go help this poor pigeon to his wandering mate again; and after institution and induction, you shall all go a-cooing together. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—Loveless's *Lodgings.*

Enter Amanda *in a scarf, &c., as just returned, her Maid following her.*

Aman. Prithee what care I who has been here?

Maid. Madam, 'twas my lady Bridle and my Lady Tiptoe.

Aman. My lady Fiddle and my lady Faddle! What dost stand troubling me with the visits of a parcel of impertinent women! When they are well seamed with the small-pox, they won't be so fond of showing their faces.—There are more coquettes about this town—

Maid. Madam, I suppose they only came to return your ladyship's visit, according to the custom of the world.

Aman. Would the world were on fire, and you in the middle on't! Begone! leave me!—[*Exit* Maid.] At last I am convinced. My eyes are testimonies of his falsehood. The base, ungrateful, perjured villain!—

Good gods! what slippery stuff are men composed of!
Sure the account of their creation's false,
And 'twas the woman's rib that they were form'd of.
But why am I thus angry?
This poor relapse should only move my scorn.
'Tis true,
The roving flights of his unfinish'd youth
Had strong excuses from the plea of nature;
Reason had thrown the reins loose on his neck,
And slipp'd him to unlimited desire.
If therefore he went wrong, he had a claim
To my forgiveness, and I did him right.
But since the years of manhood rein him in,
And reason, well digested into thought,
Has pointed out the course he ought to run;
If now he strays,
'Twould be as weak and mean in me to pardon,
As it has been in him to offend. But hold:
'Tis an ill cause indeed, where nothing's to be said for't.
My beauty possibly is in the wane;

Perhaps sixteen has greater charms for him:
Yes, there's the secret. But let him know,
My quiver's not entirely emptied yet,
I still have darts, and I can shoot 'em too;
They're not so blunt, but they can enter still:
The want's not in my power, but in my will.
Virtue's his friend; or, through another's heart,
I yet could find the way to make his smart.
[*Going off, she meets* WORTHY.
Ha! he here!
Protect me, Heaven! for this looks ominous.

Enter WORTHY.

Wor. You seem disorder'd, madam,
I hope there's no misfortune happen'd to you?
Aman. None that will long disorder me, I hope.
Wor. Whate'er it be disturbs you, would to heaven!
'Twere in my power to bear the pain,
Till I were able to remove the cause.
Aman. I hope ere long it will remove itself.
At least, I have given it warning to be gone.
Wor. Would I durst ask, where 'tis the thorn torments you!
Forgive me, if I grow inquisitive;
'Tis only with desire to give you ease.
Aman. Alas! 'tis in a tender part.
It can't be drawn without a world of pain:
Yet out it must;
For it begins to fester in my heart.
Wor. If 'tis the sting of unrequited love,
Remove it instantly:
I have a balm will quickly heal the wound.
Aman. You'll find the undertaking difficult:
The surgeon, who already has attempted it,
Has much tormented me.
Wor. I'll aid him with a gentler hand,
If you will give me leave.
Aman. How soft soe'er the hand may be,
There still is terror in the operation.
Wor. Some few preparatives would make it easy,
Could I persuade you to apply 'em.
Make home reflections, madam, on your slighted love:
Weigh well the strength and beauty of your charms:
Rouse up that spirit women ought to bear,
And slight your god, if he neglects his angel.
With arms of ice receive his cold embraces,
And keep your fire for those who come in flames.
Behold a burning lover at your feet,
His fever raging in his veins!
See how he trembles, how he pants!
See how he glows, how he consumes!
Extend the arms of mercy to his aid;
His zeal may give him title to your pity,
Although his merit cannot claim your love.
Aman. Of all my feeble sex, sure I must be the weakest,
Should I again presume to think on love. [*Sighing.*
Alas! my heart has been too roughly treated.
Wor. 'Twill find the greater bliss in softer usage.
Aman. But where's that usage to be found?
Wor. 'Tis here,
Within this faithful breast; which if you doubt,
I'll rip it up before your eyes;
Lay all its secrets open to your view;
And then, you'll see 'twas sound.
Aman. With just such words,
Honest as these, the worst of men deceived me.
Wor. He therefore merits all revenge can do;
His fault is such,
The extent and stretch of vengeance cannot reach it.
Oh! make me but your instrument of justice;
You'll find me execute it with such zeal,
As shall convince you I abhor the crime.
Aman. The rigour of an executioner,
Has more the face of cruelty than justice:
And he who puts the cord about the wretch's neck,
Is seldom known to exceed him in his morals.
Wor. What proof then can I give you of my truth?
Aman. There is on earth but one.
Wor. And is that in my power?
Aman. It is:
And one that would so thoroughly convince me,
I should be apt to rate your heart so high,
I possibly might purchase't with a part of mine.
Wor. Then heaven thou art my friend, and I am blest;
For if 'tis in my power, my will I'm sure
Will reach it. No matter what the terms
May be, when such a recompense is offer'd.
Oh! tell me quickly what this proof must be!
What is it will convince you of my love?
Aman. I shall believe you love me as you ought,
If from this moment you forbear to ask
Whatever is unfit for me to grant.—
You pause upon it, sir.—I doubt, on such hard terms,
A woman's heart is scarcely worth the having.
Wor. A heart, like yours, on any terms is worth it;
'Twas not on that I paused. But I was thinking
[*Drawing nearer to her.*
Whether some things there may not be,
Which women cannot grant without a blush,
And yet which men may take without offence.
[*Taking her hand.*
Your hand, I fancy, may be of the number:
Oh, pardon me! if I commit a rape
[*Kissing it eagerly.*
Upon't; and thus devour it with my kisses.
Aman. O heavens! let me go.
Wor. Never, whilst I have strength to hold you here. [*Forcing her to sit down on a couch.*
My life, my soul, my goddess—Oh, forgive me!
Aman. O whither am I going? Help, heaven, or I am lost.
Wor. Stand neuter, gods, this once, I do invoke you.
Aman. Then, save me, virtue, and the glory's thine.
Wor. Nay, never strive.
Aman. I will and conquer too.
My forces rally bravely to my aid.
[*Breaking from him.*
And thus I gain the day.
Wor. Then mine as bravely double their attack;
[*Seizing her again.*
And thus I wrest it from you. Nay, struggle not;
For all's in vain: or death or victory;
I am determined.
Aman. And so am I:
[*Rushing from him.*
Now keep your distance, or we part for ever.
Wor. [*Offering again.*] For Heaven's sake!—
Aman. [*Going.*] Nay then, farewell!
Wor. Oh stay! and see the magic force of love.
[*Kneeling, and holding by her clothes.*
Behold this raging lion at your feet,
Struck dead with fear, and tame as charms can make him.
What must I do to be forgiven by you?
Aman. Repent, and never more offend.

Wor. Repentance for past crimes is just and easy;
But sin no more's a task too hard for mortals.
Aman. Yet those who hope for heaven,
Must use their best endeavours to perform it.
Wor. Endeavours we may use, but flesh and blood are got
In t'other scale; and they are ponderous things.
Aman. Whate'er they are, there is a weight in resolution
Sufficient for their balance. The soul, I do confess,
Is usually so careless of its charge,
So soft, and so indulgent to desire,
It leaves the reins in the wild hand of nature,
Who like a Phaeton, drives the fiery chariot,
And sets the world on flame.
Yet still the sovereignty is in the mind,
Whene'er it pleases to exert its force.
Perhaps you may not think it worth your while,
To take such mighty pains for my esteem;
But that I leave to you.
You see the price I set upon my heart;
Perhaps 'tis dear: but, spite of all your art,
You'll find on cheaper terms we ne'er shall part. [*Exit.*

Wor. Sure there's divinity about her!
And sh'as dispensed some portion on't to me.
For what but now was the wild flame of love,
Or (to dissect that specious term) the vile,
The gross desires of flesh and blood,
Is in a moment turn'd to adoration.
The coarser appetite of nature's gone, and 'tis,
Methinks, the food of angels I require.
How long this influence may last, Heaven knows;
But in this moment of my purity,
I could on her own terms accept her heart.
Yes, lovely woman! I can accept it.
For now 'tis doubly worth my care.
Your charms are much increased, since thus adorn'd.
When truth's extorted from us, then we own
The robe of virtue is a graceful habit.
Could women but our secret counsels scan,
Could they but reach the deep reserves of man,
They'd wear it on, that that of love might last;
For when they throw off one, we soon the other [cast.
Their sympathy is such—
The fate of one, the other scarce can fly;
They live together, and together die. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.—*A Room in* Lord Foppington's *House.*

Enter Miss Hoyden *and* Nurse.

Hoyd. But is it sure and certain, say you, he's my lord's own brother?

Nurse. As sure as he's your lawful husband.

Hoyd. Ecod, if I had known that in time, I don't know but I might have kept him: for, between you and I, nurse, he'd have made a husband worth two of this I have. But which do you think you should fancy most, nurse?

Nurse. Why, truly, in my poor fancy, madam, your first husband is the prettier gentleman.

Hoyd. I don't like my lord's shapes, nurse.

Nurse. Why, in good truly, as a body may say, he is but a slam.

Hoyd. What do you think now he puts me in mind of? Don't you remember a long, loose, shambling sort of a horse my father call'd Washy?

Nurse. As like as two twin-brothers!

Hoyd. Ecod, I have thought so a hundred times: faith, I'm tired of him.

Nurse. Indeed, madam, I think you had e'en as good stand to your first bargain.

Hoyd. Oh but, nurse, we han't considered the main thing yet. If I leave my lord, I must leave my lady too; and when I rattle about the streets in my coach, they'll only say, There goes mistress—mistress—mistress what? What's this man's name I have married, nurse?

Nurse. 'Squire Fashion.

Hoyd. 'Squire Fashion is it?—Well, 'Squire, that's better than nothing. Do you think one could not get him made a knight, nurse?

Nurse. I don't know but one might, madam, when the king's in a good humour.

Hoyd. Ecod, that would do rarely. For then he'd be as good a man as my father, you know.

Nurse. By'r Lady, and that's as good as the best of 'em.

Hoyd. So 'tis, faith; for then I shall be my lady, and your ladyship at every word, that's all I have to care for. Ha, nurse, but hark you me, one thing more, and then I have done. I'm afraid, if I change my husband again, I shan't have so much money to throw about, nurse.

Nurse. Oh, enough's as good as a feast. Besides, madam, one don't know but as much may fall to your share with the younger brother as with the elder. For though these lords have a power of wealth indeed, yet, as I have heard say, they give it all to their sluts and their trulls; who joggle it about in their coaches, with a murrain to 'em! whilst poor madam sits sighing, and wishing, and knotting, and crying, and has not a spare half-crown to buy her a *Practice of Piety*.

Hoyd. Oh, but for that don't deceive yourself, nurse. For this I must say for my lord, and a—[*Snapping her fingers*] for him; he's as free as an open house at Christmas. For this very morning he told me I should have two hundred a year to buy pins. Now, nurse, if he gives me two hundred a year to buy pins, what do you think he'll give me to buy fine petticoats?

Nurse. Ah, my dearest, he deceives thee faully, and he's no better than a rogue for his pains! These Londoners have got a gibberidge with 'em would confound a gipsy. That which they call pin-money is to buy their wives everything in the varsal world, down to their very shoe-ties. Nay, I have heard folks say, that some ladies, if they will have gallants, as they call 'em, are forced to find them out of their pin-money too.

Hoyd. Has he served me so, say ye!—Then I'll be his wife no longer, that's fixed. Look, here he comes, with all the fine folks at's heels. Ecod, nurse, these London ladies will laugh till they crack again, to see me slip my collar, and run away from my husband. But, d'ye hear? Pray, take care of one thing: when the business comes to break out, be sure you get between me and my father, for you know his tricks; he'll knock me down.

Nurse. I'll mind him, ne'er fear, madam.

Enter Lord Foppington, Loveless, Worthy, Amanda, *and* Berinthia.

Lord Fop. Ladies and gentlemen, you are all welcome.—Loveless, that's my wife; prithee do me the favour to salute her; and dost hear,—[*Aside*

to him] if thau hast a mind to try thy fartune, to be revenged of me, I won't take it ill, stap my vitals!

Love. You need not fear, sir; I'm too fond of my own wife to have the least inclination to yours.

[*All salute* MISS HOYDEN.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] I'd give a thousand paund he would make love to her, that he may see she has sense enough to prefer me to him, though his own wife has not.—[*Viewing him.*] He's a very beastly fellow, in my opinion.

Hoyd. [*Aside.*] What a power of fine men there are in this London! He that kissed me first is a goodly gentleman, I promise you. Sure those wives have a rare time on't that live here always.

Enter SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSEY, *with* Musicians, Dancers, *&c.*

Sir Tun. Come, come in, good people, come in! Come tune your fiddles, tune your fiddles! —[*To the hautboys.*] Bagpipes, make ready there. Come, strike up. [*Sings.*

For this is Hoyden's wedding-day,
And therefore we keep holiday,
And come to be merry.

Ha! there's my wench, I'faith. Touch and take, I'll warrant her; she'll breed like a tame rabbit.

Hoyd. [*Aside.*] Ecod, I think my father's gotten drunk before supper.

Sir Tun. [*To* LOVELESS *and* WORTHY.] Gentlemen, you are welcome.—[*Saluting* AMANDA and BERINTHIA.] Ladies, by your leave.—[*Aside.*] Ha! they bill like turtles. Udsookers, they set my old blood a-fire; I shall cuckold somebody before morning.

Lord Fop. [*To* SIR TUNBELLY.] Sir, you being master of the entertainment, will you desire the company to sit?

Sir Tun. Oons, sir, I'm the happiest man on this side the Ganges!

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] This is a mighty unaccountable old fellow.—[*To* SIR TUNBELLY.] I said, sir, it would be convenient to ask the company to sit.

Sir Tun. Sit!—with all my heart.—Come, take your places, ladies; take your places, gentlemen. —Come sit down, sit down; a pox of ceremony! take your places.

[*They sit, and the masque begins.*

Enter CUPID *and* HYMEN, *with a Chorus of* Dancers.

Cup. Thou bane to my empire, thou spring of contest,
Thou source of all discord, thou period to rest,
Instruct me, what wretches in bondage can see,
That the aim of their life is still pointed to thee.

Hym. Instruct me, thou little, impertinent god,
From whence all thy subjects have taken the mode
To grow fond of a change, to whatever it be,
And I'll tell thee why those would be bound who are free.

Chorus.

For change, we're for change, to whatever it be,
We are neither contented with freedom nor thee.
Constancy's an empty sound,
Heaven, and earth, and all go round,
All the works of Nature move,
All the joys of life and love
Are in variety.

Cup. Were love the reward of a pains-taking life,
Had a husband the art to be fond of his wife,
Were virtue so plenty, a wife could afford,
These very hard times, to be true to her lord,
Some specious account might be given of those
Who are tied by the tail, to be led by the nose.

But since 'tis the fate of a man and his wife,
To consume all their days in contention and strife;
Since, whatever the bounty of Heaven may create her,
He's morally sure he shall heartily hate her,
I think 'twere much wiser to ramble at large,
And the volleys of love on the herd to discharge.

Hym. Some colour of reason thy counsel might bear,
Could a man have no more than his wife to his share:
Or were I a monarch so cruelly just,
To oblige a poor wife to be true to her trust;
But I have not pretended, for many years past,
By marrying of people, to make 'em grow chaste.

I therefore advise thee to let me go on,
Thou'lt find I'm the strength and support of thy throne;
For hadst thou but eyes, thou wouldst quickly perceive it,
How smoothly the dart
Slips into the heart
Of a woman that's wed;
Whilst the shivering maid
Stands trembling, and wishing, but dare not receive it.

Chorus.

For change, we're for change, to whatever it be,
We are neither contented with freedom nor thee.
Constancy's an empty sound,
Heaven, and earth, and all go round,
All the works of Nature move,
And the joys of life and love
Are in variety.

[*End of the masque.*

Sir Tun. So; very fine, very fine, i'faith! this is something like a wedding. Now, if supper were but ready I'd say a short grace; and if I had such a bedfellow as Hoyden to-night—I'd say as short prayers.

Enter TOM FASHION, COUPLER, *and* BULL.

How now!—what have we got here? a ghost! Nay, it must be so, for his flesh and blood could never have dared to appear before me.—[*To* TOM FASHION.] Ah, rogue!

Lord Fop. Stap my vitals, Tam again!

Sir Tun. My lord, will you cut his throat? or shall I?

Lord Fop. Leave him to me, sir, if you please. —Prithee, Tam, be so ingenuous now as to tell me what thy business is here?

Fash. 'Tis with your bride.

Lord Fop. Thau art the impudentest fellow that Nature has yet spawned into the warld, strike me speechless!

Fash. Why, you know my modesty would have starved me; I sent it a-begging to you, and you would not give it a groat.

Lord Fop. And dost thau expect by an excess of assurance to extart a maintenance fram me?

Fash. [*Taking* Miss HOYDEN *by the hand.*] I do intend to extort your mistress from you, and that I hope will prove one.

Lord Fop. I ever thaught Newgate or Bedlam would be his fartune, and naw his fate's decided.—Prithee, Loveless, dost know of ever a mad-doctor hard by?

Fash. There's one at your elbow will cure you presently.—[*To* BULL.] Prithee, doctor, take him in hand quickly.

Lord Fop. Shall I beg the favour of you, sir, to pull your fingers out of my wife's hand?

Fash. His wife! Look you there; now I hope you are all satisfied he's mad.

Lord Fop. Naw, it is not passible far me to penetrate what species of fally it is thou art driving at!

Sir Tun. Here, here, here, let me beat out his brains, and that will decide all.

Lord Fop. No, pray, sir, hold, we'll destray him presently according to law.

Fash. [*To* BULL.] Nay, then advance, doctor: come, you are a man of conscience, answer boldly to the questions I shall ask. Did not you marry me to this young lady before ever that gentleman there saw her face?

Bull. Since the truth must out, I did.

Fash. Nurse, sweet nurse, were not you a witness to it?

Nurse. Since my conscience bids me speak—I was.

Fash. [*To* Miss HOYDEN.] Madam, am not I your lawful husband?

Hoyd. Truly I can't tell, but you married me first.

Fash. Now I hope you are all satisfied?

Sir Tun. [*Offering to strike him, is held by* LOVELESS *and* WORTHY.] Oons and thunder, you lie!

Lord Fop. Pray, sir, be calm, the battle is in disarder, but requires more canduct than courage to rally our forces.—Pray, dactar, one word with you.—[*Aside to* BULL.] Look you, sir, though I will not presume to calculate your notions of damnation fram the description you give us of hell, yet since there is at least a passibility you may have a pitchfark thrust in your backside, methinks it should not be worth your while to risk your saul in the next warld for the sake of a beggarly yaunger brather, who is nat able to make your bady happy in this.

Bull. Alas! my lord, I have no worldly ends; I speak the truth, Heaven knows.

Lord Fop. Nay, prithee, never engage Heaven in the matter, for by all I can see 'tis like to prove a business for the devil.

Fash. Come, pray sir, all above-board, no corrupting of evidences. If you please, this young lady is my lawful wife, and I'll justify it in all the courts of England; so your lordship (who always had a passion for variety) may go seek a new mistress if you think fit.

Lord Fop. I am struck dumb with his impudence, and cannot passitively tell whether ever I shall speak again or nat.

Sir Tun. Then let me come and examine the business a little, I'll jerk the truth out of 'em presently. Here, give me my dog-whip.

Fash. Look you, old gentleman, 'tis in vain to make a noise; if you grow mutinous, I have some friends within call have swords by their sides above four foot long; therefore be calm, hear the evidence patiently, and when the jury have given their verdict, pass sentence according to law. Here's honest Coupler shall be foreman, and ask as many questions as he pleases.

Coup. All I have to ask is, whether nurse persists in her evidence? The parson, I dare swear, will never flinch from his.

Nurse. [*To* Sir TUNBELLY, *kneeling.*] I hope in heaven your worship will pardon me: I have served you long and faithfully, but in this thing I was overreached; your worship, however, was deceived as well as I, and if the wedding-dinner had been ready, you had put madam to bed with him with your own hands.

Sir Tun. But how durst you do this, without acquainting of me?

Nurse. Alas! if your worship had seen how the poor thing begged, and prayed, and clung, and twined about me, like ivy to an old wall, you would say, I who had suckled it, and swaddled it, and nursed it both wet and dry, must have had a heart of adamant to refuse it.

Sir Tun. Very well!

Fash. Foreman, I expect your verdict.

Coup. Ladies and gentlemen, what's your opinions?

All. A clear case! a clear case!

Coup. Then, my young folks, I wish you joy.

Sir Tun. [*To* TOM FASHION.] Come hither, stripling; if it be true then, that thou hast married my daughter, prithee tell me who thou art?

Fash. Sir, the best of my condition is, I am your son-in-law; and the worst of it is, I am brother to that noble peer there.

Sir Tun. Art thou brother to that noble peer!—Why, then, that noble peer, and thee, and thy wife, and the nurse, and the priest—may all go and be damned together! [*Exit.*

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] Now, for my part, I think the wisest thing a man can do with an aching heart is to put on a serene countenance; for a philosophical air is the most becoming thing in the world to the face of a person of quality. I will therefore bear my disgrace like a great man, and let the people see I am above an affront.—[*Aloud.*] Dear Tam, since things are thus fallen aut, prithee give me leave to wish thee jay; I do it *de bon cœur*, strike me dumb! You have married a woman beautiful in her person, charming in her airs, prudent in her canduct, canstant in her inclinations, and of a nice marality, split my windpipe!

Fash. Your lardship may keep up your spirits with your grimace if you please, I shall support mine with this lady, and two thousand pound a-year.—[*Taking* Miss HOYDEN'S *hand.*] Come, madam:—

We once again, you see, are man and wife,
And now, perhaps, the bargain's struck for life.
If I mistake, and we should part again,
At least you see you may have choice of men:
Nay, should the war at length such havoc make,
That lovers should grow scarce, yet for your sake,
Kind Heaven always will preserve a beau:
[*Pointing to* Lord FOPPINGTON.
You'll find his lordship ready to come to.

Lord Fop. Her ladyship shall stap my vitals if I do.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE,

SPOKEN BY LORD FOPPINGTON.

Gentlemen and Ladies,
These people have regaled you here to-day
(In my opinion) with a saucy play;
In which the author does presume to show,
That coxcomb, *ab origine*—was beau.
Truly I think the thing of so much weight,
That if some sharp chastisement ben't his fate,
Gad's curse! it may in time destroy the state.
I hold no one its friend, I must confess,
Who would discauntenance you men of dress.
Far, give me leave to abserve, good clothes are things
Have ever been of great support to kings;
All treasons come from slovens, it is nat
Within the reach of gentle beaux to plat;
They have no gall, no spleen, no teeth, no stings,
Of all Gad's creatures, the most harmless things.
Through all recard, no prince was ever slain,
By one who had a feather in his brain.
They're men of too refined an education,
To squabble with a court—for a vile dirty nation.
I'm very pasitive you never saw
A through republican a finish'd beau.
Nor, truly, shall you very often see
A Jacobite much better dress'd than he;
In shart, through all the courts that I have been in,
Your men of mischief—still are in faul linen.
Did ever one yet dance the Tyburn jig,
With a free air, or a well-pawder'd wig?
Did ever highwaymen yet bid you stand,
With a sweet bawdy snuffbax in his hand?
Ar do you ever find they ask your purse
As men of breeding do?—Ladies, Gad's curse!
This author is a dag, and 'tis not fit
You should allow him even one grain of wit:
To which, that his pretence may ne'er be named,
My humble motion is—he may be damn'd.

THE PROVOKED WIFE.

A Comedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CONSTANT, } *Gentlemen of the Town.*
HEARTFREE, }
SIR JOHN BRUTE.
LORD RAKE, } *Companions to* SIR JOHN BRUTE.
COLONEL BULLY, }
TREBLE, *a Singing-Master.*
RASOR, *Valet-de-Chambre to* SIR JOHN BRUTE.
LOVEWELL, *Page to* LADY BRUTE.
JOE, *a Porter.*
Justice of the Peace.
Page *to* LORD RAKE.
LADY BRUTE, *Wife of* SIR JOHN BRUTE.
BELINDA, *her Niece.*
LADY FANCYFUL.
MADEMOISELLE, *Fille-de-Chambre to* LADY FANCYFUL.
CORNET, } *Maids to* LADY FANCYFUL.
PIPE, }
Tailor, Constable, Watchmen, Footmen, &c.

SCENE,—LONDON.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. BRACEGIRDLE.

SINCE 'tis the intent and business of the stage,
To copy out the follies of the age;
To hold to every man a faithful glass,
And show him of what species he's an ass:
I hope the next that teaches in the school,
Will show our author he's a scribbling fool.
And, that the satire may be sure to bite,
Kind Heaven inspire some venom'd priest to write!
And grant some ugly lady may indite!
For I would have him lash'd, by heavens I would!
Till his presumption swam away in blood.
Three plays at once proclaims a face of brass,
No matter what they are; that's not the case;
To write three plays, e'en that's to be an ass.
But what I least forgive, he knows it too,
For to his cost he lately has known you.
Experience shows, to many a writer's smart,
You hold a court where mercy ne'er had part;
So much of the old serpent's sting you have,
You love to damn, as Heaven delights to save.
In foreign parts, let a bold volunteer,
For public good, upon the stage appear,
He meets ten thousand smiles to dissipate his fear.
All tickle on the adventuring young beginner,
And only scourge the incorrigible sinner;
They touch indeed his faults, but with a hand
So gentle, that his merit still may stand:
Kindly they buoy the follies of his pen,
That he may shun 'em when he writes again.
But 'tis not so in this good-natured town;
All's one, an ox, a poet, or a crown;
Old England's play was always knocking down.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Sir JOHN BRUTE'S *House.*

Enter Sir JOHN BRUTE.

Sir John. What cloying meat is love—when matrimony's the sauce to it! Two years' marriage has debauched my five senses. Everything I see, everything I hear, everything I feel, everything I smell, and everything I taste—methinks has wife in't. No boy was ever so weary of his tutor, no girl of her bib, no nun of doing penance, nor old maid of being chaste, as I am of being married. Sure, there's a secret curse entailed upon the very name of wife. My lady is a young lady, a fine lady, a witty lady, a virtuous lady—and yet I hate her. There is but one thing I loathe on earth beyond her: that's fighting. Would my courage come up but to a fourth part of my ill-nature, I'd stand buff to her relations, and thrust her out of doors. But marriage has sunk me down to such an ebb of resolution, I dare not draw my sword, though even to get rid of my wife. But here she comes.

Enter LADY BRUTE.

Lady Brute. Do you dine at home to-day, sir John?

Sir John. Why, do you expect I should tell you what I don't know myself?

Lady Brute. I thought there was no harm in asking you.

Sir John. If thinking wrong were an excuse for impertinence, women might be justified in most things they say or do.

Lady Brute. I'm sorry I've said anything to displease you.

Sir John. Sorrow for things past is of as little importance to me, as my dining at home or abroad ought to be to you.

Lady Brute. My inquiry was only that I might have provided what you liked.

Sir John. Six to four you had been in the wrong there again; for what I liked yesterday I don't like to-day, and what I like to-day, 'tis odds I mayn't like to-morrow.

Lady Brute. But if I had asked you what you liked?

Sir John. Why, then, there would be more asking about it than the thing is worth.

Lady Brute. I wish I did but know how I might please you.

Sir John. Ay, but that sort of knowledge is not a wife's talent.

Lady Brute. Whate'er my talent is, I'm sure my will has ever been to make you easy.

Sir John. If women were to have their wills the world would be finely governed.

Lady Brute. What reason have I given you to use me as you do of late? It once was otherwise. You married me for love.

Sir John. And you me for money. So, you have your reward, and I have mine.

Lady Brute. What is it that disturbs you?

Sir John. A parson.

Lady Brute. Why, what has he done to you?

Sir John. He has married me. [*Exit.*

Lady Brute. The devil's in the fellow, I think! —I was told before I married him that thus 'twould be: but I thought I had charms enough to govern him; and that where there was an estate, a woman must needs be happy; so, my vanity has deceived me, and my ambition has made me uneasy. But there's some comfort still; if one would be revenged of him, these are good times; a woman may have a gallant, and a separate maintenance too.—The surly puppy!—Yet, he's a fool for't; for hitherto he has been no monster: but who knows how far he may provoke me? I never loved him, yet I have been ever true to him; and that in spite of all the attacks of art and nature upon a poor weak woman's heart, in favour of a tempting lover. Methinks so noble a defence as I have made should be rewarded with a better usage.—Or who can tell —perhaps a good part of what I suffer from my husband, may be a judgment upon me for my cruelty to my lover.—Lord, with what pleasure could I indulge that thought, were there but a possibility of finding arguments to make it good!—And how do I know but there may?—Let me see.—What opposes?—My matrimonial vow.—Why, what did I vow? I think I promised to be true to my husband. Well; and he promised to be kind to me. But he han't kept his word.—Why, then, I am absolved from mine.—Ay, that seems clear to me. The argument's good between the king and the people, why not between the husband and the wife? Oh, but that condition was not expressed.—No matter, 'twas understood. Well, by all I see, if I argue the matter a little longer with myself, I shan't find so many bugbears in the way as I thought I should. Lord, what fine notions of virtue do we women take up upon the credit of old foolish philosophers! Virtue's its own reward, virtue's this, virtue's that—virtue's an ass, and a gallant's worth forty on't.

Enter BELINDA.

Lady Brute. Good morrow, dear cousin!

Bel. Good-morrow, madam; you look pleased this morning.

Lady Brute. I am so.

Bel. With what, pray?

Lady Brute. With my husband.

Bel. Drown husbands! for yours is a provoking fellow. As he went out just now, I prayed him to tell me what time of day 'twas; and he asked me if I took him for the church-clock, that was obliged to tell all the parish.

Lady Brute. He has been saying some good obliging things to me too. In short, Belinda, he has used me so barbarously of late, that I could almost resolve to play the downright wife—and cuckold him.

Bel. That would be downright, indeed.

Lady Brute. Why, after all, there's more to be said for't than you'd imagine, child. I know, according to the strict statute law of religion, I should do wrong; but, if there were a Court of Chancery in heaven, I'm sure I should cast him.

Bel. If there were a House of Lords you might.

Lady Brute. In either I should infallibly carry my cause. Why, he's the first aggressor, not I.

Bel. Ay, but you know, we must return good for evil.

Lady Brute. That may be a mistake in the translation.—Prithee, be of my opinion, Belinda; for I'm positive I'm in the right; and if you'll keep up the prerogative of a woman, you'll likewise be positive you are in the right, whenever you do anything you have a mind to. But I shall play the fool and jest on, till I make you begin to think I'm in earnest.

Bel. I shan't take the liberty, madam, to think of anything that you desire to keep a secret from me.

Lady Brute. Alas, my dear! I have no secrets. My heart could never yet confine my tongue.

Bel. Your eyes, you mean; for I'm sure I have seen them gadding, when your tongue has been locked up safe enough.

Lady Brute. My eyes gadding! prithee after who, child?

Bel. Why, after one that thinks you hate him as much as I know you love him.

Lady Brute. Constant, you mean?

Bel. I do so.

Lady Brute. Lord, what should put such a thing into your head?

Bel. That which puts things into most people's heads—observation.

Lady Brute. Why what have you observed, in the name of wonder?

Bel. I have observed you blush when you meet

him, force yourself away from him, and then be out of humour with everything about you. In a word, never was poor creature so spurred on by desire, and so reined in with fear!

Lady Brute. How strong is fancy!

Bel. How weak is woman!

Lady Brute. Prithee, niece, have a better opinion of your aunt's inclination.

Bel. Dear aunt, have a better opinion of your niece's understanding.

Lady Brute. You'll make me angry.

Bel. You'll make me laugh.

Lady Brute. Then you are resolved to persist?

Bel. Positively.

Lady Brute. And all I can say—

Bel. Will signify nothing.

Lady Brute. Though I should swear 'twere false—

Bel. I should think it true.

Lady Brute. Then let us both forgive—[*Kissing her*] for we have both offended: I in making a secret, you in discovering it.

Bel. Good-nature may do much: but you have more reason to forgive one, than I have to pardon t'other.

Lady Brute. 'Tis true, Belinda, you have given me so many proofs of your friendship, that my reserve has been indeed a crime. But that you may more easily forgive me, remember, child, that when our nature prompts us to a thing our honour and religion have forbid us, we would (were't possible) conceal, even from the soul itself, the knowledge of the body's weakness.

Bel. Well, I hope, to make your friend amends, you'll hide nothing from her for the future, though the body should still grow weaker and weaker.

Lady Brute. No, from this moment I have no more reserve; and for a proof of my repentance, I own, Belinda, I'm in danger. Merit and wit assault me from without; nature and love solicit me within; my husband's barbarous usage piques me to revenge; and Satan, catching at the fair occasion, throws in my way that vengeance which, of all vengeance, pleases women best.

Bel. 'Tis well Constant don't know the weakness of the fortification; for, o' my conscience, he'd soon come on to the assault!

Lady Brute. Ay, and I'm afraid carry the town too. But whatever you may have observed, I have dissembled so well as to keep him ignorant. So you see I'm no coquette, Belinda: and if you'll follow my advice, you'll never be one neither. 'Tis true, coquetry is one of the main ingredients in the natural composition of a woman; and I, as well as others, could be well enough pleased to see a crowd of young fellows ogling, and glancing, and watching all occasions to do forty foolish officious things. Nay, should some of 'em push on, even to hanging or drowning, why, faith, if I should let pure woman alone, I should e'en be but too well pleased with't.

Bel. I'll swear 'twould tickle me strangely.

Lady Brute. But after all, 'tis a vicious practice in us to give the least encouragement but where we design to come to a conclusion. For 'tis an unreasonable thing to engage a man in a disease which we beforehand resolve we never will apply a cure to.

Bel. 'Tis true; but then a woman must abandon one of the supreme blessings of her life. For I am fully convinced, no man has half that pleasure in possessing a mistress as a woman has in jilting a gallant.

Lady Brute. The happiest woman then on earth must be our neighbour.

Bel. O the impertinent composition! She has vanity and affectation enough to make her a ridiculous original, in spite of all that art and nature ever furnished to any of her sex before her.

Lady Brute. She concludes all men her captives; and whatever course they take, it serves to confirm her in that opinion.

Bel. If they shun her, she thinks 'tis modesty, and takes it for a proof of their passion.

Lady Brute. And if they are rude to her, 'tis conduct, and done to prevent town-talk.

Bel. When her folly makes 'em laugh, she thinks they are pleased with her wit.

Lady Brute. And when her impertinence makes 'em dull, concludes they are jealous of her favours.

Bel. All their actions and their words she takes for granted aim at her.

Lady Brute. And pities all other women because she thinks they envy her.

Bel. Pray, out of pity to ourselves, let us find a better subject, for I'm weary of this. Do you think your husband inclined to jealousy?

Lady Brute. Oh, no; he does not love me well enough for that. Lord, how wrong men's maxims are! They are seldom jealous of their wives, unless they are very fond of 'em; whereas they ought to consider the women's inclinations, for there depends their fate. Well, men may talk; but they are not so wise as we, that's certain.

Bel. At least in our affairs.

Lady Brute. Nay, I believe we should outdo 'em in the business of the state too; for methinks they do and undo, and make but bad work on't.

Bel. Why then don't we get into the intrigues of government as well as they?

Lady Brute. Because we have intrigues of our own that make us more sport, child. And so let's in, and consider of 'em. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—Lady FANCYFUL'S *Dressing-Room.*

Enter Lady FANCYFUL, MADEMOISELLE, *and* CORNET.

Lady Fan. How do I look this morning?

Cor. Your ladyship looks very ill, truly.

Lady Fan. Lard, how ill-natured thou art, Cornet, to tell me so, though the thing should be true! Don't you know that I have humility enough to be but too easily out of conceit with myself. Hold the glass; I dare swear that will have more manners than you have.—Mademoiselle, let me have your opinion too.

Mad. My opinion pe, matam, dat your ladyship never look so well in your life.

Lady Fan. Well, the French are the prettiest obliging people; they say the most acceptable, well-mannered things, and never flatter.

Mad. Your ladyship say great justice inteed.

Lady Fan. Nay, everything's just in my house but Cornet.—The very looking-glass gives her the *démenti.*—But I'm almost afraid it flatters me, it makes me look so very engaging.

[*Looking affectedly in the glass.*

Mad. Inteed, matam, your face pe handsomer den all de looking-glass in tee world, croyez-moi!

Lady Fan. But is it possible my eyes can be so languishing, and so very full of fire?

Mad. Matam, if de glass was burning-glass, I believe your eyes set de fire in de house.

Lady Fan. You may take that night-gown, Mademoiselle.—Get out of the room, Cornet! I can't endure you.—[*Exit* CORNET.] This wench, methinks, does look so unsufferably ugly.

Mad. Every ting look ugly, matam, dat stand by your latiship.

Lady Fan. No really, Mademoiselle, methinks you look mighty pretty.

Mad. Ah, matam, de moon have no eclat, ven de sun appear.

Lady Fan. O pretty expression! Have you ever been in love, Mademoiselle?

Mad. Oui, matam. [*Sighing.*

Lady Fan. And were you beloved again?

Mad. No, matam. [*Sighing.*

Lady Fan. O ye gods! what an unfortunate creature should I be in such a case! But nature has made me nice for my own defence: I'm nice, strangely nice, Mademoiselle. I believe were the merit of whole mankind bestowed upon one single person, I should still think the fellow wanted something to make it worth my while to take notice of him. And yet I could love; nay fondly love, were it possible to have a thing made on purpose for me: for I'm not cruel, Mademoiselle; I'm only nice.

Mad. Ah, matam, I wish I was fine gentleman for your sake. I do all de ting in de world to get leetel way into your heart. I make song, I make verse, I give you de serenade, I give great many present to Mademoiselle; I no eat, I no sleep, I be lean, I be mad, I hang myself, I drown myself. Ah ma chère dame, que je vous aimerais! [*Embracing her.*

Lady Fan. Well, the French have strange obliging ways with 'em; you may take those two pair of gloves, Mademoiselle.

Mad. Me humbly tanke my sweet lady.

Re-enter CORNET.

Cor. Madam, here's a letter for your ladyship by the penny-post. [*Exit.*

Lady Fan. Some new conquest, I'll warrant you. For without vanity, I looked extremely clear last night, when I went to the Park.—O agreeable! Here's a new song made of me: and ready set too. O thou welcome thing!—[*Kissing it.*] Call Pipe hither, she shall sing it instantly.

Enter PIPE.

Here, sing me this new song, Pipe.

PIPE *sings.*

Fly, fly, you happy shepherds, fly!
  Avoid Philira's charms;
The rigour of her heart denies
  The heaven that's in her arms.
Ne'er hope to gaze, and then retire,
  Nor yielding, to be blest:
Nature, who form'd her eyes of fire,
  Of ice composed her breast.

Yet, lovely maid, this once believe
  A slave whose zeal you move;
The gods, alas, your youth deceive,
  Their heaven consists in love.
In spite of all the thanks you owe,
  You may reproach 'em this,
That where they did their form bestow,
  They have denied their bliss. [*Exit.*

Lady Fan. Well there may be faults, Mademoiselle, but the design is so very obliging, 'twould be a matchless ingratitude in me to discover 'em.

Mad. Ma foi, matam, I tink de gentleman's song tell you de trute: if you never love, you never be happy.—Ah, que j'aime l'amour moi!

Re-enter CORNET, *with another letter.*

Cor. Madam, here's another letter for your ladyship. [*Exit.*

Lady Fan. 'Tis thus I am importuned every morning, Mademoiselle. Pray how do the French ladies when they are thus accablées?

Mad. Matam, dey never complain. Au contraire, when one Frense laty have got hundred lover—den she do all she can—to get hundred more.

Lady Fan. Well, strike me dead, I think they have le goût bon! For 'tis an unutterable pleasure to be adored by all the men, and envied by all the women.—Yet I'll swear I'm concerned at the torture I give 'em. Lard, why was I formed to make the whole creation uneasy! But let me read my letter.—[*Reads.*] *If you have a mind to hear of your faults, instead of being praised for your virtues, take the pains to walk in the Green-walk in St. James's with your woman an hour hence. You'll there meet one who hates you for some things, as he could love you for others, and therefore is willing to endeavour your reformation. If you come to the place I mention, you'll know who I am; if you don't, you never shall: so take your choice.*—This is strangely familiar, Mademoiselle; now have I a provoking fancy to know who this impudent fellow is.

Mad. Den take your scarf and your mask, and go to de rendezvous. De Frense laty do justement comme ça.

Lady Fan. Rendezvous! What, rendezvous with a man, Mademoiselle!

Mad. Eh, pourquoi non?

Lady Fan. What, and a man perhaps I never saw in my life.

Mad. Tant mieux: c'est donc quelque chose de nouveau.

Lady Fan. Why, how do I know what designs he may have? He may intend to ravish me for aught I know.

Mad. Ravish!—bagatelle. I would fain see one impudent rogue ravish Mademoiselle; oui, je le voudrais.

Lady Fan. Oh, but my reputation, Mademoiselle, my reputation; ah, ma chère réputation!

Mad. Matam, quand on l'a une fois perdue, on n'en est plus embarrassée.

Lady Fan. Fi Mademoiselle, fi! Reputation is a jewel.

Mad. Qui coûte bien-chère, matam.

Lady Fan. Why sure you would not sacrifice your honour to your pleasure?

Mad. Je suis philosophe.

Lady Fan. Bless me, how you talk! Why, what if honour be a burden, Mademoiselle, must it not be borne?

Mad. Chacun à sa façon. Quand quelquechose m'incommode moi, je m'en défais, vite.

Lady Fan. Get you gone, you little naughty Frenchwoman you! I vow and swear I must turn you out of doors, if you talk thus.

Mad. Turn me out of doors!—turn yourself out of doors, and go see what de gentleman have to

say to you.—Tenez.—Voilà [*Giving her her things hastily*] votre écharpe, voilà votre coiffe, voilà votre masque, voilà tout.—[*Calling within.*] Hé, Mercure, coquin! call one chair for matam, and one oder for me: va-t'en vite.—[*Turning to her lady, and helping her on hastily with her things.*] Allons, matam; dépêchez-vous donc. Mon Dieu, quelles scrupules!

Lady Fan. Well for once, Mademoiselle, I'll follow your advice, out of the intemperate desire I have to know who this ill-bred fellow is. But I have too much délicatesse to make a practice on't.

Mad. Belle chose vraiment que la délicatesse, lorsqu'il s'agit de se divertir!—Ah, ça—Vous voilà équipée; partons.—Hé bien!—qu'avez vous donc?

Lady Fan. J'ai peur.

Mad. Je n'en ai point moi.

Lady Fan. I dare not go.

Mad. Démeurez donc.

Lady Fan. Je suis poltronne.

Mad. Tant pis pour vous.

Lady Fan. Curiosity's a wicked devil.

Mad. C'est une charmante sainte.

Lady Fan. It ruined our first parents.

Mad. Elle a bien diverti leurs enfans.

Lady Fan. L'honneur est contre.

Mad. Le plaisir est pour.

Lady Fan. Must I then go?

Mad. Must you go!—must you eat, must you drink, must you sleep, must you live? De nature bid you do one, de nature bid you do toder.—Vous me ferez enrager!

Lady Fan. But when reason corrects nature, Mademoiselle?

Mad. Elle est donc bien insolente, c'est sa sœur aînée.

Lady Fan. Do you then prefer your nature to your reason, Mademoiselle?

Mad. Oui dà.

Lady Fan. Pourquoi?

Mad. Because my nature make me merry, my reason make me mad.

Lady Fan. Ah la méchante Française!

Mad. Ah la belle Anglaise!

[*Exit, forcing off* Lady FANCYFUL.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*St. James's Park.*

Enter Lady FANCYFUL *and* MADEMOISELLE.

Lady Fan. Well, I vow, Mademoiselle, I'm strangely impatient to know who this confident fellow is.

Enter HEARTFREE.

Look, there's Heartfree. But sure it can't be him; he's a professed woman-hater. Yet who knows what my wicked eyes may have done!

Mad. Il nous approche, madame.

Lady Fan. Yes, 'tis he: now will he be most intolerably cavalier, though he should be in love with me.

Heart. Madam, I'm your humble servant; I perceive you have more humility and good-nature than I thought you had.

Lady Fan. What you attribute to humility and good-nature, sir, may perhaps be only due to curiosity. I had a mind to know who 'twas had ill manners enough to write that letter.

[*Throwing him his Letter.*

Heart. Well, and now I hope you are satisfied.

Lady Fan. I am so, sir; good b'w'y t'ye.

Heart. Nay, hold there; though you have done your business, I han't done mine: by your ladyship's leave, we must have one moment's prattle together. Have you a mind to be the prettiest woman about town, or not? How she stares upon me! What! this passes for an impertinent question with you now, because you think you are so already.

Lady Fan. Pray, sir, let me ask you a question in my turn: by what right do you pretend to examine me?

Heart. By the same right that the strong govern the weak, because I have you in my power; for you cannot get so quickly to your coach but I shall have time enough to make you hear everything I have to say to you.

Lady Fan. These are strange liberties you take, Mr. Heartfree!

Heart. They are so, madam, but there's no help for it; for know that I have a design upon you.

Lady Fan. Upon me, sir!

Heart. Yes; and one that will turn to your glory, and my comfort, if you will but be a little wiser than you use to be.

Lady Fan. Very well, sir.

Heart. Let me see—your vanity, madam, I take to be about some eight degrees higher than any woman's in the town, let t'other be who she will; and my indifference is naturally about the same pitch. Now could you find the way to turn this indifference into fire and flames, methinks your vanity ought to be satisfied; and this, perhaps, you might bring about upon pretty reasonable terms.

Lady Fan. And pray at what rate would this indifference be bought off, if one should have so depraved an appetite to desire it?

Heart. Why, madam, to drive a quaker's bargain, and make but one word with you, if I do part with it—you must lay me down—your affectation.

Lady Fan. My affectation, sir!

Heart. Why, I ask you nothing but what you may very well spare.

Lady Fan. You grow rude, sir!—Come, Mademoiselle, 'tis high time to be gone.

Mad. Allons, allons, allons!

Heart. [*Stopping them.*] Nay, you may as well stand still; for hear me you shall, walk which way you please.

Lady Fan. What mean you, sir?

Heart. I mean to tell you, that you are the most ungrateful woman upon earth.

Lady Fan. Ungrateful! To who?

Heart. To nature.

Lady Fan. Why, what has nature done for me?

Heart. What you have undone by art. It made you handsome; it gave you beauty to a miracle, a shape without a fault, wit enough to make 'em relish, and so turned you loose to your own discretion; which has made such work with you, that you are become the pity of our sex, and the jest of your own. There is not a feature in your face, but you have found the way to teach it some affected convulsion; your feet, your hands, your very fingers' ends, are directed never to move without some ridiculous air or other; and your language is a suitable trumpet, to draw people's eyes upon the raree-show.

Mad. [*Aside.*] Est-ce qu'on fait l'amour en Angleterre comme ça?

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] Now could I cry for madness, but that I know he'd laugh at me for it.

Heart. Now do you hate me for telling you the truth, but that's because you don't believe it is so; for were you once convinced of that, you'd reform for your own sake. But 'tis as hard to persuade a woman to quit anything that makes her ridiculous, as 'tis to prevail with a poet to see a fault in his own play.

Lady Fan. Every circumstance of nice breeding must needs appear ridiculous to one who has so natural an antipathy to good manners.

Heart. But suppose I could find the means to convince you, that the whole world is of my opinion, and that those who flatter and commend you, do it to no other intent, but to make you persevere in your folly, that they may continue in their mirth.

Lady Fan. Sir, though you and all that world you talk of, should be so impertinently officious as to think to persuade me I don't know how to behave myself, I should still have charity enough for my own understanding, to believe myself in the right, and all you in the wrong.

Mad. Le voilà mort!

[*Exeunt* Lady FANCYFUL *and* MADEMOISELLE.

Heart. [*Gazing after her.*] There, her single clapper has published the sense of the whole sex. Well, this once I have endeavoured to wash the blackamoor white; but henceforward I'll sooner undertake to teach sincerity to a courtier, generosity to a usurer, honesty to a lawyer, nay, humility to a divine, than discretion to a woman I see has once set her heart upon playing the fool.

Enter CONSTANT.

Morrow, Constant.

Const. Good morrow, Jack: what are you doing here this morning?

Heart. Doing! guess, if thou canst.—Why I have been endeavouring to persuade my lady Fancyful that she's the foolishest woman about town.

Const. A pretty endeavour truly!

Heart. I have told her in as plain English as I could speak, both what the town says of her, and what I think of her. In short, I have used her as an absolute king would do Magna Charta.

Const. And how does she take it?

Heart. As children do pills; bite 'em, but can't swallow 'em.

Const. But, prithee, what has put it into your head, of all mankind, to turn reformer?

Heart Why, one thing was, the morning hung upon my hands, I did not know what to do with myself; and another was, that as little as I care for women, I could not see with patience one that Heaven had taken such wondrous pains about, be so very industrious to make herself the jack-pudding of the creation.

Const. Well, now could I almost wish to see my cruel mistress make the self-same use of what Heaven has done for her, that so I might be cured of a disease that makes me so very uneasy; for love, love is the devil, Heartfree.

Heart. And why do you let the devil govern you?

Const. Because I have more flesh and blood than grace and self-denial. My dear, dear mistress!—'Sdeath! that so genteel a woman should be a saint when religion's out of fashion!

Heart. Nay, she's much in the wrong truly; but who knows how far time and good example may prevail?

Const. Oh! they have played their parts in vain already. 'Tis now two years since that damned fellow her husband invited me to his wedding: and there was the first time I saw that charming woman, whom I have loved ever since, more than e'er a martyr did his soul; but she is cold, my friend, still cold as the northern star.

Heart. So are all women by nature, which makes 'em so willing to be warmed.

Const. Oh, don't profane the sex! Prithee think 'em all angels for her sake, for she's virtuous even to a fault.

Heart. A lover's head is a good accountable thing truly! He adores his mistress for being virtuous, and yet is very angry with her because she won't be lewd.

Const. Well, the only relief I expect in my misery is to see thee some day or other as deeply engaged as myself, which will force me to be merry in the midst of all my misfortunes.

Heart. That day will never come, be assured, Ned. Not but that I can pass a night with a woman, and for the time, perhaps, make myself as good sport as you can do. Nay, I can court a woman too, call her nymph, angel, goddess, what you please: but here's the difference 'twixt you and I; I persuade a woman she's an angel, and she persuades you she's one. Prithee let me tell you how I avoid falling in love; that which serves me for prevention, may chance to serve you for a cure.

Const. Well, use the ladies moderately then, and I'll hear you.

Heart. That using 'em moderately undoes us all; but I'll use 'em justly, and that you ought to be satisfied with. I always consider a woman, not as the tailor, the shoemaker, the tire-woman, the sempstress, and (which is more than all that) the poet makes her; but I consider her as pure nature has contrived her, and that more strictly than I should have done our old grandmother Eve, had I seen her naked in the garden; for I consider her turned inside out. Her heart, well-examined, I find there pride, vanity, covetousness, indiscretion, but above all things malice; plots eternally a-forging to destroy one another's reputations, and as honestly to charge the levity of men's tongues with the scandal; hourly debates how to make poor gentlemen in love with 'em, with no other intent but to use 'em like dogs when they have done; a constant desire of doing more mischief,

and an everlasting war waged against truth and good-nature.

Const. Very well, sir; an admirable composition truly!

Heart. Then for her outside, I consider it merely as an outside; she has a thin tiffany covering, over just such stuff as you and I are made on. As for her motion, her mien, her airs, and all those tricks, I know they affect you mightily. If you should see your mistress at a coronation dragging her peacock's train, with all her state and insolence about her, 'twould strike you with all the awful thoughts that heaven itself could pretend to from you; whereas I turn the whole matter into a jest, and suppose her strutting in the self-same stately manner, with nothing on but her stays, and her under scanty quilted petticoat.

Const. Hold thy profane tongue! for I'll hear no more.

Heart. What! you'll love on then?

Const. Yes, to eternity.

Heart. Yet you have no hopes at all.

Const. None.

Heart. Nay, the resolution may be discreet enough; perhaps you have found out some new philosophy, that love's like virtue, its own reward. So you and your mistress will be as well content at a distance, as others that have less learning are in coming together.

Const. No; but if she should prove kind at last, my dear Heartfree. [*Embracing him.*

Heart. Nay, prithee, don't take me for your mistress, for lovers are very troublesome.

Const. Well, who knows what time may do!

Heart. And just now he was sure time could do nothing.

Const. Yet not one kind glance in two years, is somewhat strange.

Heart. Not strange at all; she don't like you, that's all the business.

Const. Prithee, don't distract me.

Heart. Nay, you are a good handsome young fellow, she might use you better. Come, will you go see her? Perhaps she may have changed her mind; there's some hopes as long as she's a woman.

Const. Oh, 'tis in vain to visit her! Sometimes to get a sight of her I visit that beast her husband; but she certainly finds some pretence to quit the room as soon as I enter.

Heart. It's much she don't tell him you have made love to her too, for that's another good-natured thing usual amongst women, in which they have several ends. Sometimes 'tis to recommend their virtue, that they may be lewd with the greater security. Sometimes 'tis to make their husbands fight, in hopes they may be killed when their affairs require it should be so: but most commonly 'tis to engage two men in a quarrel, that they may have the credit of being fought for; and if the lover's killed in the business, they cry, *Poor fellow, he had ill luck!*—and so they go to cards.

Const. Thy injuries to women are not to be forgiven. Look to't, if ever thou dost fall into their hands—

Heart. They can't use me worse than they do you, that speak well of 'em.—O ho! here comes the knight.

Enter SIR JOHN BRUTE.

Your humble servant, sir John.

Sir John. Servant, sir.

Heart. How does all your family?

Sir John. Pox o' my family!

Const. How does your lady? I han't seen her abroad a good while.

Sir John. Do! I don't know how she does, not I; she was well enough yesterday: I han't been at home to-night.

Const. What, were you out of town?

Sir John. Out of town! no, I was drinking.

Const. You are a true Englishman; don't know your own happiness. If I were married to such a woman, I would not be from her a night for all the wine in France.

Sir John. Not from her! Oons; what a time should a man have of that!

Heart. Why, there's no division, I hope.

Sir John. No; but there's a conjunction, and that's worse; a pox of the parson!—Why the plague don't you two marry? I fancy I look like the devil to you.

Heart. Why, you don't think you have horns, do you?

Sir John. No, I believe my wife's religion will keep her honest.

Heart. And what will make her keep her religion?

Sir John. Persecution; and therefore she shall have it.

Heart. Have a care, knight; women are tender things.

Sir John. And yet, methinks, 'tis a hard matter to break their hearts.

Const. Fy! fy! you have one of the best wives in the world, and yet you seem the most uneasy husband.

Sir John. Best wives!—the woman's well enough, she has no vice that I know of, but she's a wife, and—damn a wife! If I were married to a hogshead of claret, matrimony would make me hate it.

Heart. Why did you marry, then? you were old enough to know your own mind.

Sir John. Why did I marry! I married because I had a mind to lie with her, and she would not let me.

Heart. Why did not you ravish her?

Sir John. Yes! and so have hedged myself into forty quarrels with her relations, besides buying my pardon. But more than all that, you must know, I was afraid of being damned in those days; for I kept sneaking cowardly company, fellows that went to church, said grace to their meat, and had not the least tincture of quality about 'em.

Heart. But I think you have got into a better gang now.

Sir John. Zoons, sir, my lord Rake and I are hand and glove, I believe we may get our bones broke together to-night; have you a mind to share a frolic?

Const. Not I, truly; my talent lies to softer exercises.

Sir John. What, a down-bed and a strumpet? A pox of venery! I say. Will you come and drink with me this afternoon?

Const. I can't drink to-day, but we'll come and sit an hour with you if you will.

Sir John. Phu! pox, sit an hour! Why can't you drink?

Const. Because I'm to see my mistress.
Sir John. Who's that?
Const. Why, do you use to tell?
Sir John. Yes.
Const. So won't I.
Sir John. Why?
Const. Because 'tis a secret.
Sir John. Would my wife knew it, 'twould be no secret long.
Const. Why, do you think she can't keep a secret?
Sir John. No more than she can keep Lent.
Heart. Prithee, tell it her to try, Constant.
Sir John. No, prithee, don't, that I mayn't be plagued with it.
Const. I'll hold you a guinea you don't make her tell it you.
Sir John. I'll hold you a guinea I do.
Const. Which way?
Sir John. Why, I'll beg her not to tell it me.
Heart. Nay, if anything does it, that will.
Const. But do you think, sir—
Sir John. Oons, sir, I think a woman and a secret are the two impertinentest themes in the universe! Therefore, pray let's hear no more of my wife nor your mistress. Damn 'em both with all my heart, and everything else that daggles a petticoat, except four generous whores, with Betty Sands at the head of 'em, who are drunk with my lord Rake and I ten times in a fortnight. [*Exit.*
Const. Here's a dainty fellow for you! and the veriest coward too. But his usage of his wife makes me ready to stab the villain.
Heart. Lovers are short-sighted: all their senses run into that of feeling. This proceeding of his is the only thing on earth can make your fortune. If anything can prevail with her to accept of a gallant, 'tis his ill usage of her; for women will do more for revenge than they'll do for the gospel. Prithee take heart, I have great hopes for you; and since I can't bring you quite off of her, I'll endeavour to bring you quite on; for a whining lover is the damn'dest companion upon earth.
Const. My dear friend, flatter me a little more with these hopes; for whilst they prevail, I have heaven within me, and could melt with joy.
Heart. Pray, no melting yet: let things go farther first. This afternoon perhaps we shall make some advance. In the meanwhile, let's go dine at Locket's, and let hope get you a stomach. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Lady FANCYFUL'S *House.*

Enter Lady FANCYFUL *and* MADEMOISELLE.

Lady Fan. Did you ever see anything so im portune, Mademoiselle?
Mad. Inteed, matam, to say de trute, he wanted leetel good-breeding.
Lady Fan. Good-breeding! he wants to be caned, Mademoiselle: an insolent fellow! And yet let me expose my weakness, 'tis the only man on earth I could resolve to dispense my favours on, were he but a fine gentleman. Well, did men but know how deep an impression a fine gentleman makes in a lady's heart, they would reduce all their studies to that of good-breeding alone.

Enter CORNET.

Cor. Madam, here's Mr. Treble. He has brought home the verses your ladyship made, and gave him to set.
Lady Fan. O let him come in by all means.—[*Exit* CORNET.]—Now, Mademoiselle, am I going to be unspeakably happy.

Enter TREBLE *and* PIPE.

So, Mr. Treble, you have set my little dialogue?
Treb. Yes, madam, and I hope your ladyship will be pleased with it.
Lady Fan. Oh, no doubt on't; for really, Mr. Treble, you set all things to a wonder. But your music is in particular heavenly when you have my words to clothe in't.
Treb. Your words themselves, madam, have so much music in 'em, they inspire me.
Lady Fan. Nay, now you make me blush, Mr. Treble; but pray let's hear what you have done.
Treb. You shall, madam.

TREBLE *and* PIPE *sing.*

Treb. Ah! lovely nymph, the world's on fire;
Veil, veil those cruel eyes!
Pipe. The world may then in flames expire,
And boast that so it dies.

Treb. But when all mortals are destroy'd,
Who then shall sing your praise?
Pipe. Those who are fit to be employ'd:
The gods shall altars raise.

Treb. How does your ladyship like it, madam?
Lady Fan. Rapture, rapture, Mr. Treble, I'm all rapture! O wit and art, what power you have, when joined! I must needs tell you the birth of this little dialogue, Mr. Treble. Its father was a dream, and its mother was the moon. I dreamt that by an unanimous vote I was chosen queen of that pale world: and that the first time I appeared upon my throne—all my subjects fell in love with me. Just then I waked, and seeing pen, ink, and paper lie idle upon the table, I slid into my morning-gown, and writ this impromptu.
Treb. So I guess the dialogue, madam, is supposed to be between your majesty, and your first minister of state.
Lady Fan. Just. He as minister advises me to trouble my head about the welfare of my subjects; which I as sovereign find a very impertinent proposal. But is the town so dull, Mr. Treble, it affords us never another new song?
Treb. Madam, I have one in my pocket, came out but yesterday, if your ladyship pleases to let Mrs. Pipe sing it.
Lady Fan. By all means.—Here, Pipe, make what music you can of this song here.

PIPE *sings.*

Not an angel dwells above
Half so fair as her I love,
Heaven knows how she'll receive me:
If she smiles, I'm blest indeed;
If she frowns, I'm quickly freed;
Heaven knows she ne'er can grieve me.

None can love her more than I,
Yet she ne'er shall make me die,
If my flame can never warm her;
Lasting beauty I'll adore,
I shall never love her more,
Cruelty will so deform her.

Lady Fan. Very well. — This is Heartfree's poetry, without question.

Treb. Won't your ladyship please to sing yourself this morning?

Lady Fan. O Lord, Mr. Treble, my cold is still so barbarous to refuse me that pleasure. He,—he, —hem. [*Coughs.*

Treb. I'm very sorry for it, madam. Methinks all mankind should turn physicians for the cure on't.

Lady Fan. Why truly, to give mankind their due, there's few that know me, but have offered their remedy.

Treb. They have reason, madam: for I know nobody sings so near a cherubim as your ladyship.

Lady Fan. What I do, I owe chiefly to your skill and care, Mr. Treble. People do flatter me, indeed, that I have a voice, and a *je-ne-sais-quoi* in the conduct of it, that will make music of anything. And truly I begin to believe so, since what happened t'other night. Would you think it, Mr. Treble? walking pretty late in the Park (for I often walk late in the Park, Mr. Treble) a whim took me to sing Chevy-Chase, and would you believe it? next morning I had three copies of verses and six billets-doux at my levee upon it.

Treb. And without all dispute you deserved as many more, madam. Are there any further commands for your ladyship's humble servant?

Lady Fan. Nothing more at this time, Mr. Treble. But I shall expect you here every morning for this month, to sing my little matter there to me. I'll reward you for your pains.

Treb. O Lord, madam!—

Lady Fan. Good morrow, sweet Mr. Treble.

Treb. Your ladyship's most obedient servant.

[*Exit with* PIPE.

Re-enter CORNET.

Cor. Will your ladyship please to dine yet?

Lady Fan. Yes, let 'em serve.—[*Exit* CORNET.] Sure this Heartfree has bewitched me, Mademoiselle. You can't imagine how oddly he mixed himself in my thoughts during my rapture e'en now. I vow 'tis a thousand pities he is not more polished: don't you think so?

Mad. Matam, I tink it so great pity, dat if I was in your ladyship place, I take him home in my house, I lock him up in my closet, and I never let him go till I teach him everyting dat fine laty expect from fine gentleman.

Lady Fan. Why truly I believe I should soon subdue his brutality; for without doubt he has a strange penchant to grow fond of me, in spite of his aversion to the sex, else he would ne'er have taken so much pains about me. Lord, how proud would some poor creatures be of such a conquest! But I, alas, I don't know how to receive as a favour, what I take to be so infinitely my due. But what shall I do to new-mould him, Mademoiselle? for till then he's my utter aversion.

Mad. Matam, you must laugh at him in all de place dat you meet him, and turn into de ridicule all he say and all he do.

Lady Fan. Why truly, satire has ever been of wondrous use to reform ill-manners. Besides, 'tis my particular talent to ridicule folks. I can be severe, strangely severe, when I will, Mademoiselle.—Give me the pen and ink—I find myself whimsical—I'll write to him.—Or I'll let it alone, and be severe upon him that way.—[*Sits down to write, rises up again.*] Yet active severity is better than passive.—[*Sits down.*] 'Tis as good let it alone too; for every lash I give him perhaps he'll take for a favour.—[*Rises.*] Yet 'tis a thousand pities so much satire should be lost.—[*Sits.*] But if it should have a wrong effect upon him, 'twould distract me.—[*Rises.*] Well, I must write though, after all.—[*Sits.*] Or I'll let it alone, which is the same thing.— [*Rises.*

Mad. [*Aside.*] La voilà déterminée. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* SIR JOHN BRUTE'S *House.*

SIR JOHN BRUTE, LADY BRUTE, *and* BELINDA, *discovered rising from table;* Servant *waiting.*

Sir John. [*To* Servant.] Here, take away the things; I expect company. But first bring me a pipe; I'll smoke.

[Servant *gives* SIR JOHN *a pipe, removes the things, and exit.*

Lady Brute. Lord, sir John, I wonder you won't leave that nasty custom!

Sir John. Prithee don't be impertinent.

Bel. [*Aside to* LADY BRUTE.] I wonder who those are he expects this afternoon?

Lady Brute. I'd give the world to know. Perhaps 'tis Constant, he comes here sometimes; if it does prove him, I'm resolved I'll share the visit.

Bel. We'll send for our work and sit here.

Lady Brute. He'll choke us with his tobacco.

Bel. Nothing will choke us when we are doing what we have a mind to.—Lovewell! [*Calls.*

Enter LOVEWELL.

Love. Madam!

Lady Brute. Here; bring my cousin's work and mine hither.

[*Exit* LOVEWELL, *re-enters with their work, and then retires.*

Sir John. Whu! Pox! can't you work somewhere else?

Lady Brute. We shall be careful not to disturb you, sir.

Bel. Your pipe will make you too thoughtful, uncle, if you were left alone; our prittle-prattle will cure your spleen.

Sir John. Will it so, Mrs. Pert? Now I believe it will so increase it,—[*Sitting and smoking*] I shall take my own house for a paper mill.

Lady Brute. [*Aside to* BELINDA.] Don't let's mind him: let him say what he will.

Sir John. A woman's tongue a cure for the spleen—oons!—[*Aside.*] If a man had got the headache, they'd be for applying the same remedy.

Lady Brute. You have done a great deal, Belinda, since yesterday.

Bel. Yes, I have worked very hard; how do you like it?

Lady Brute. Oh, 'tis the prettiest fringe in the

world! Well, cousin, you have the happiest fancy: prithee advise me about altering my crimson petticoat.

Sir John. A pox o' your petticoat! Here's such a prating, a man can't digest his own thoughts for you.

Lady Brute. Don't answer him.—Well, what do you advise me?

Bel. Why really I would not alter it at all. Methinks 'tis very pretty as it is.

Lady Brute. Ay, that's true: but you know one grows weary of the prettiest things in the world, when one has had 'em long.

Sir John. Yes, I have taught her that.

Bel. Shall we provoke him a little?

Lady Brute. With all my heart.—Belinda, don't you long to be married?

Bel. Why, there are some things in it I could like well enough.

Lady Brute. What do you think you should dislike?

Bel. My husband, a hundred to one else.

Lady Brute. O ye wicked wretch! sure you don't speak as you think.

Bel. Yes, I do: especially if he smoked tobacco. [Sir JOHN *looks earnestly at them.*

Lady Brute. Why, that many times takes off worse smells.

Bel. Then he must smell very ill indeed.

Lady Brute. So some men will, to keep their wives from coming near 'em.

Bel. Then those wives should cuckold 'em at a distance.

[Sir JOHN *rises in a fury, throws his pipe at them, and drives them out. As they go off* Lady BRUTE *runs against* CONSTANT.

Enter CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE, *a* Servant *following.*

Sir John. Oons, get you gone up stairs, you confederating strumpets you, or I'll cuckold you with a vengeance!

Lady Brute. O Lord, he'll beat us, he'll beat us!—Dear, dear Mr. Constant, save us! [*Exit with* BELINDA.

Sir John. I'll cuckold you, with a pox!

Const. Heavens, sir John! what's the matter?

Sir John. Sure, if woman had been ready created, the devil, instead of being kicked down into hell, had been married.

Heart. Why, what new plague have you found now?

Sir John. Why these two gentlewomen did but hear me say, I expected you here this afternoon; upon which they presently resolved to take up the room, o' purpose to plague me and my friends.

Const. Was that all? Why we should have been glad of their company.

Sir John. Then I should have been weary of yours: for I can't relish both together. They found fault with my smoking tobacco too; and said, men stunk. But I have a good mind—to say something.

Const. No, nothing against the ladies, pray.

Sir John. Split the ladies! Come, will you sit down?—[*To* Servant.] Give us some wine, fellow.—You won't smoke?

Const. No, nor drink neither at this time, I must ask your pardon.

Sir John. What, this mistress of yours runs in your head; I'll warrant it's some such squeamish minx as my wife, that's grown so dainty of late she finds fault even with a dirty shirt.

Heart. That a woman may do, and not be very dainty neither.

Sir John. Pox o' the women! let's drink. Come, you shall take one glass, though I send for a box of lozenges to sweeten your mouth after it.

Const. Nay, if one glass will satisfy you, I'll drink it, without putting you to that expense.

Sir John. Why that's honest.—[*To* Servant, *who fills the glasses and exit.*] Fill some wine, sirrah!—So, here's to you, gentlemen!—A wife's the devil. To your being both married? [*They drink.*

Heart. O your most humble servant, sir.

Sir John. Well, how do you like my wine?

Const. 'Tis very good indeed.

Heart. 'Tis admirable.

Sir John. Then give us t'other glass.

Const. No, pray excuse us now. We'll come another time, and then we won't spare it.

Sir John. This one glass, and no more. Come, it shall be your mistress's health: and that's a great compliment from me, I assure you.

Const. And 'tis a very obliging one to me: so give us the glasses.

Sir John. So: let her live!

[*They drink:* Sir JOHN *coughs in the glass.*

Heart. And be kind.

Const. What's the matter? does it go the wrong way?

Sir John. If I had love enough to be jealous, I should take this for an ill omen: for I never drank my wife's health in my life, but I puked in the glass.

Const. Oh she's too virtuous to make a reasonable man jealous.

Sir John. Pox of her virtue! If I could but catch her adulterating, I might be divorced from her by law.

Heart. And so pay her a yearly pension, to be a distinguished cuckold.

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, there's my lord Rake, colonel Bully, and some other gentlemen, at the Blue-posts, desire your company. [*Exit.*

Sir John. Cod's so, we are to consult about playing the devil to-night.

Heart. Well, we won't hinder business.

Sir John. Methinks I don't know how to leave you though; but for once I must make bold. Or look you, maybe the conference mayn't last long: so if you'll wait here half an hour, or an hour; if I don't come then—why then—I won't come at all.

Heart. [*Aside to* CONSTANT.] A good modest proposition truly!

Const. But let's accept on't however. Who knows what may happen!

Heart. Well, sir, to show you how fond we are of your company, we'll expect your return as long as we can.

Sir John. Nay, maybe I mayn't stay at all: but business, you know, must be done. So your servant—or, hark you, if you have a mind to take a frisk with us, I have an interest with my lord, I can easily introduce you.

Const. We are much beholden to you: but for my part, I'm engaged another way.

Sir John. What, to your mistress, I'll warrant! Prithee leave your nasty punk to entertain herself with her own lewd thoughts, and make one with us to-night.

Const. Sir, 'tis business that is to employ me.

Heart. And me; and business must be done, you know.

Sir John. Ay, women's business, though the world were consumed for't. [*Exit.*

Const. Farewell, beast!—And now, my dear friend, would my mistress be but as complaisant as some men's wives, who think it a piece of good-breeding to receive the visits of their husband's friends in his absence!

Heart. Why for your sake I could forgive her, though she should be so complaisant to receive something else in his absence. But what way shall we invent to see her?

Const. O ne'er hope it: invention will prove as vain as wishes.

Re-enter Lady Brute *and* Belinda.

Heart. [*Aside to* Constant.] What do you think now, friend?

Const. I think I shall swoon.

Heart. I'll speak first then, whilst you fetch breath.

Lady Brute. We think ourselves obliged, gentlemen, to come and return you thanks for your knight-errantry. We were just upon being devoured by the fiery dragon.

Bel. Did not his fumes almost knock you down, gentlemen?

Heart. Truly, ladies, we did undergo some hardships; and should have done more, if some greater heroes than ourselves hard by had not diverted him.

Const. Though I'm glad of the service you are pleased to say we have done you, yet I'm sorry we could do it no other way than by making ourselves privy to what you would perhaps have kept a secret.

Lady Brute. For sir John's part, I suppose he designed it no secret, since he made so much noise: and, for myself, truly I am not much concerned, since 'tis fallen only into this gentleman's hands and yours, who, I have many reasons to believe, will neither interpret nor report anything to my disadvantage.

Const. Your good opinion, madam, was what I feared I never could have merited.

Lady Brute. Your fears were vain then, sir: for I am just to everybody.

Heart. Prithee, Constant, what is't you do to get the ladies' good opinions, for I'm a novice at it?

Bel. Sir, will you give me leave to instruct you?

Heart. Yes, that I will, with all my soul, madam.

Bel. Why then you must never be slovenly, never be out of humour; fare well, and cry roast-meat; smoke tobacco, nor drink but when you are a-dry.

Heart. That's hard.

Const. Nay, if you take his bottle from him, you break his heart, madam.

Bel. Why, is it possible the gentleman can love drinking?

Heart. Only by way of antidote.

Bel. Against what, pray?

Heart. Against love, madam.

Lady Brute. Are you afraid of being in love, sir?

Heart. I should, if there were any danger of it.

Lady Brute. Pray, why so?

Heart. Because I always had an aversion to being used like a dog.

Bel. Why, truly, men in love are seldom used better.

Lady Brute. But was you never in love, sir?

Heart. No, I thank Heaven, madam.

Bel. Pray where got you your learning, then?

Heart. From other people's expense.

Bel. That's being a spunger, sir, which is scarce honest. If you'd buy some experience with your own money, as 'twould be fairlier got, so 'twould stick longer by you.

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, here's my lady Fancyful, to wait upon your ladyship. [*Exit.*

Lady Brute. Shield me, kind Heaven! What an inundation of impertinence is here coming upon us!

Enter Lady Fancyful, *who runs first to* Lady Brute, *then to* Belinda, *kissing them.*

Lady Fan. My dear lady Brute! and sweet Belinda! methinks 'tis an age since I saw you.

Lady Brute. Yet 'tis but three days; sure you have passed your time very ill, it seems so long to you.

Lady Fan. Why really, to confess the truth to you, I am so everlastingly fatigued with the addresses of unfortunate gentlemen, that were it not for the extravagancy of the example, I should e'en tear out these wicked eyes with my own fingers, to make both myself and mankind easy.—What think you on't, Mr. Heartfree, for I take you to be my faithful adviser?

Heart. Why truly, madam, I think every project that is for the good of mankind ought to be encouraged.

Lady Fan. Then I have your consent, sir—

Heart. To do whatever you please, madam.

Lady Fan. You had a much more limited complaisance this morning, sir.—Would you believe it, ladies? the gentleman has been so exceeding generous, to tell me of above fifty faults in less time than it was well possible for me to commit two of 'em.

Const. Why truly, madam, my friend there is apt to be something familiar with the ladies.

Lady Fan. He is, indeed, sir; but he's wondrous charitable with it. He has had the goodness to design a reformation, even down to my fingers'-ends.—'Twas thus, I think, sir, you'd have had 'em stand?—[*Opening her fingers in an awkward manner.*] My eyes too he did not like.—How was't you would have directed 'em?—Thus, I think.—[*Staring at him.*] Then there was something amiss in my gait too! I don't know well how 'twas, but, as I take it, he would have had me walk like him.—Pray, sir, do me the favour to take a turn or two about the room, that the company may see you.—He's sullen, ladies, and won't. But, to make short, and give you as true an idea as I can of the matter, I think 'twas much about this figure in general he would have moulded me to: but I was an obstinate woman, and could not resolve to make myself mistress of his heart by growing as awkward as his fancy.

[*She walks awkwardly about, staring and looking ungainly; then changes on a sudden to the extremity of her usual affectation.*

Heart. Just thus women do, when they think we are in love with 'em, or when they are so with us.

[*Here* Constant *and* Lady Brute *talk together apart.*

Lady Fan. 'Twould, however, be less vanity for me to conclude the former than you the latter, sir.

Heart. Madam, all I shall presume to conclude is, that if I were in love, you'd find the means to make me soon weary on't.

Lady Fan. Not by over-fondness, upon my word, sir.—But pray let's stop here; for you are so much governed by instinct, I know you'll grow brutish at last.

Bel. [*Aside.*] Now I'm sure she's fond of him; I'll try to make her jealous.—[*Aloud.*] Well, for my part, I should be glad to find somebody would be so free with me, that I might know my faults, and mend 'em.

Lady Fan. Then pray let me recommend this gentleman to you: I have known him some time, and will be surety for him, that upon a very limited encouragement on your side, you shall find an extended impudence on his.

Heart. I thank you, madam, for your recommendation: but hating idleness, I'm unwilling to enter into a place where I believe there would be nothing to do. I was fond of serving your ladyship, because I knew you'd find me constant employment.

Lady Fan. I told you he'd be rude, Belinda!

Bel. Oh, a little bluntness is a sign of honesty, which makes me always ready to pardon it.—So, sir, if you have no other exceptions to my service, but the fear of being idle in 't, you may venture to list yourself: I shall find you work, I warrant you.

Heart. Upon those terms I engage, madam; and this (with your leave) I take for earnest.

[*Offering to kiss her hand.*

Bel. Hold there, sir! I'm none of your earnest-givers: but if I'm well served, I give good wages, and pay punctually.

[HEARTFREE *and* BELINDA *talk familiarly apart.*

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] I don't like this jesting between 'em.—Methinks the fool begins to look as if he were in earnest;—but then he must be a fool indeed!—Lard, what a difference there is between me and her!—[*Looking at* BELINDA *scornfully.*]—How I should despise such a thing, if I were a man!—What a nose she has! what a chin! what a neck!—Then, her eyes!—and the worst kissing lips in the universe!—No, no, he can never like her, that's positive.—Yet I can't suffer 'em together any longer.—[*Aloud.*]—Mr. Heartfree, do you know that you and I must have no quarrel for all this?—I can't forbear being a little severe now and then: but women, you know, may be allowed anything.

Heart. Up to a certain age, madam.

Lady Fan. Which I'm not yet past, I hope.

Heart. [*Aside.*] Nor never will, I dare swear.

Lady Fan. [*To* Lady BRUTE.] Come, madam, will your ladyship be witness to our reconciliation?

Lady Brute. You agree then at last.

Heart. [*Slightingly.*] We forgive.

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] That was a cold, ill-natured reply.

Lady Brute. Then there's no challenges sent between you?

Heart. Not from me, I promise!—[*Aside to* CONSTANT.] But that's more than I'll do for her, for I know she can as well be damned as forbear writing to me.

Const. That I believe. But I think we had best be going, lest she should suspect something, and be malicious.

Heart. With all my heart.

Const. Ladies, we are your humble servants. I see sir John is quite engaged, 'twould be in vain to expect him.—Come, Heartfree.

Heart. Ladies, your servant.—[*To* BELINDA.] I hope, madam, you won't forget our bargain; I'm to say what I please to you.

Bel. Liberty of speech entire, sir.

[*Exeunt* HEARTFREE *and* CONSTANT.

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] Very pretty truly!—But how the blockhead went out! languishing at her; and not a look toward me!—Well, churchmen may talk, but miracles are not ceased. For 'tis more than natural, such a rude fellow as he, and such a little impertinent as she, should be capable of making a woman of my sphere uneasy. But I can bear her sight no longer.—Methinks she's grown ten times uglier than Cornet. I must go home, and study revenge.—[*To* Lady BRUTE.] Madam, your humble servant; I must take my leave.

Lady Brute. What, going already, madam?

Lady Fan. I must beg you'll excuse me this once; for really I have eighteen visits to return this afternoon. So you see I am importuned by the women as well as the men.

Bel. [*Aside.*] And she's quits with 'em both.

Lady Fan. [*Going.*] Nay, you shan't go one step out of the room.

Lady Brute. Indeed I'll wait upon you down.

Lady Fan. No, sweet lady Brute, you know I swoon at ceremony.

Lady Brute. Pray, give me leave.

Lady Fan. You know I won't.

Lady Brute. Indeed I must.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't.

Lady Brute. Indeed I will.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't.

Lady Brute. Indeed I will.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't. Indeed, indeed, indeed you shan't.

[*Exit running,* Lady BRUTE *and* BELINDA *following.*

Re-enter Lady BRUTE.

Lady Brute. This impertinent woman has put me out of humour for a fortnight.—What an agreeable moment has her foolish visit interrupted!—Lord, how like a torrent love flows into the heart, when once the sluice of desire is opened! Good gods! what a pleasure there is in doing what we should not do!

Re-enter CONSTANT.

Ha! here again?

Const. Though the renewing my visit may seem a little irregular, I hope I shall obtain your pardon for it, madam, when you know I only left the room, lest the lady who was here should have been as malicious in her remarks, as she's foolish in her conduct.

Lady Brute. He who has discretion enough to be tender of a woman's reputation, carries a virtue about him may atone for a great many faults.

Const. If it has a title to atone for any, its pretensions must needs be strongest, where the crime is love. I therefore hope I shall be forgiven the attempt I have made upon your heart, since my enterprise has been a secret to all the world but yourself.

Lady Brute. Secrecy indeed in sins of this kind

is an argument of weight to lessen the punishment; but nothing's a plea for a pardon entire, without a sincere repentance.

Const. If sincerity in repentance consists in sorrow for offending, no cloister ever inclosed so true a penitent as I should be. But I hope it cannot be reckoned an offence to love, where 'tis a duty to adore.

Lady Brute. 'Tis an offence, a great one, where it would rob a woman of all she ought to be adored for, her virtue.

Const. Virtue!—Virtue, alas, is no more like the thing that's called so, than 'tis like vice itself. Virtue consists in goodness, honour, gratitude, sincerity, and pity; and not in peevish, snarling, strait-laced chastity. True virtue, wheresoe'er it moves, still carries an intrinsic worth about it, and is in every place, and in each sex, of equal value. So is not continence, you see: that phantom of honour, which men in every age have so contemned, they have thrown it amongst the women to scrabble for.

Lady Brute. If it be a thing of so very little value, why do you so earnestly recommend it to your wives and daughters?

Const. We recommend it to our wives, madam, because we would keep 'em to ourselves; and to our daughters, because we would dispose of 'em to others.

Lady Brute. 'Tis then of some importance, it seems, since you can't dispose of 'em without it.

Const. That importance, madam, lies in the humour of the country, not in the nature of the thing.

Lady Brute. How do you prove that, sir?

Const. From the wisdom of a neighbouring nation in a contrary practice. In monarchies things go by whimsy, but commonwealths weigh all things in the scale of reason.

Lady Brute. I hope we are not so very light a people, to bring up fashions without some ground.

Const. Pray what does your ladyship think of a powdered coat for deep mourning?

Lady Brute. I think, sir, your sophistry has all the effect that you can reasonably expect it should have; it puzzles, but don't convince.

Const. I'm sorry for it.

Lady Brute. I'm sorry to hear you say so.

Const. Pray why?

Lady Brute. Because if you expected more from it, you have a worse opinion of my understanding than I desire you should have.

Const. [*Aside.*] I comprehend her: she would have me set a value upon her chastity, that I may think myself the more obliged to her when she makes me a present of it.—[*Aloud.*] I beg you will believe I did but rally, madam; I know you judge too well of right and wrong to be deceived by arguments like those. I hope you'll have so favourable an opinion of my understanding too, to believe the thing called virtue has worth enough with me to pass for an eternal obligation where'er 'tis sacrificed.

Lady Brute. It is, I think, so great a one, as nothing can repay.

Const. Yes; the making the man you love your everlasting debtor.

Lady Brute. When debtors once have borrowed all we have to lend, they are very apt to grow shy of their creditors' company.

Const. That, madam, is only when they are forced to borrow of usurers, and not of a generous friend. Let us choose our creditors, and we are seldom so ungrateful to shun 'em.

Lady Brute. What think you of sir John, sir? I was his free choice.

Const. I think he's married, madam.

Lady Brute. Does marriage then exclude men from your rule of constancy?

Const. It does. Constancy's a brave, free, haughty, generous agent, that cannot buckle to the chains of wedlock. There's a poor sordid slavery in marriage, that turns the flowing tide of honour, and sinks us to the lowest ebb of infamy. 'Tis a corrupted soil; ill-nature, avarice, sloth, cowardice, and dirt, are all its product.

Lady Brute. Have you no exceptions to this general rule, as well as to t'other?

Const. Yes; I would (after all) be an exception to it myself, if you were free in power and will to make me so.

Lady Brute. Compliments are well placed, where 'tis impossible to lay hold on 'em.

Const. I would to heaven 'twere possible for you to lay hold on mine, that you might see it is no compliment at all. But since you are already disposed of beyond redemption, to one who does not know the value of the jewel you have put into his hands, I hope you would not think him greatly wronged, though it should sometimes be looked on by a friend, who knows how to esteem it as he ought.

Lady Brute. If looking on't alone would serve his turn, the wrong perhaps might not be very great.

Const. Why, what if he should wear it now and then a day, so he gave good security to bring it home again at night?

Lady Brute. Small security I fancy might serve for that. One might venture to take his word.

Const. Then where's the injury to the owner?

Lady Brute. 'Tis injury to him if he think it one. For if happiness be seated in the mind, unhappiness must be so too.

Const. Here I close with you, madam, and draw my conclusive argument from your own position: if the injury lie in the fancy, there needs nothing but secrecy to prevent the wrong.

Lady Brute. [*Going.*] A surer way to prevent it, is to hear no more arguments in its behalf.

Const. [*Following her.*] But, madam—

Lady Brute. But, sir, 'tis my turn to be discreet now, and not suffer too long a visit.

Const. [*Catching her hand.*] By heaven you shall not stir! till you give me hopes that I shall see you again at some more convenient time and place.

Lady Brute. I give you just hopes enough—[*Breaking from him*] to get loose from you: and that's all I can afford you at this time.

[*Exit, running.*

Const. Now by all that's great and good, she's a charming woman! In what ecstacy of joy she has left me! For she gave me hope; did she not say she gave me hope?—Hope! ay; what hope!—enough to make me let her go!—Why that's enough in conscience. Or, no matter how 'twas spoke; hope was the word; it came from her, and it was said to me.

Re-enter HEARTFREE.

Ha, Heartfree! Thou hast done me noble service in prattling to the young gentlewoman without there; come to my arms, thou venerable bawd, and let me squeeze thee—[*Embracing him eagerly*] as a new pair of stays does a fat country girl, when she's carried to court to stand for a maid of honour.

Heart. Why, what the devil's all this rapture for?

Const. Rapture! there's ground for rapture, man; there's hopes, my Heartfree; hopes, my friend!

Heart. Hopes! of what?

Const. Why, hopes that my lady and I together (for 'tis more than one body's work) should make sir John a cuckold.

Heart. Prithee, what did she say to thee?

Const. Say! what did she not say? She said that—says she—she said—zoons, I don't know what she said: but she looked as if she said everything I'd have her; and so if thou'lt go to the tavern, I'll treat thee with anything that gold can buy: I'll give all my silver amongst the drawers, make a bonfire before the door, say the plenipos have signed the peace, and the Bank of England's grown honest. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Blue Posts.*

Lord RAKE, Sir JOHN BRUTE, Colonel BULLY *and others discovered at a table, drinking.* Page *waiting.*

All. Huzza!

Rake. Come, boys, charge again.—So.—Confusion to all order! Here's liberty of conscience!

All. Huzza!

Rake. I'll sing you a song I made this morning to this purpose.

Sir John. 'Tis wicked, I hope.

Bully. Don't my lord tell you he made it?

Sir John. Well then, let's ha't.

Lord RAKE *sings.*

What a pother of late
Have they kept in the state
About setting our consciences free!
A bottle has more
Dispensations in store,
Than the king and the state can decree.

When my head's full of wine,
I o'erflow with design,
And know no penal laws that can curb me:
Whate'er I devise,
Seems good in my eyes,
And religion ne'er dares to disturb me.

No saucy remorse
Intrudes in my course,
Nor impertinent notions of evil,
So there's claret in store,
In peace I've my whore,
And in peace I jog on to the devil.

All. So there's claret in store,
In peace I've my whore,

Rake. And in peace I jog on to the devil.

Well, how do you like it, gentlemen?

All. O, admirable!

Sir John. I would not give a fig for a song that is not full of sin and impudence.

Rake. Then my muse is to your taste.—But drink away; the night steals upon us; we shall want time to be lewd in.—Hey, page, sally out, sirrah, and see what's doing in the camp; we'll beat up their quarters presently.

Page. I'll bring your lordship an exact account. [*Exit.*

Rake. Now let the spirit of clary go round! Fill me a brimmer. Here's to our forlorn hope!—Courage, knight; victory attends you.

Sir John. And laurels shall crown me; drink away, and be damned.

Rake. Again, boys; t'other glass, and damn morality.

Sir John. [*Drunk.*] Ay—damn morality!—and damn the watch!—and let the constable be married!

All. Huzza!

Re-enter Page.

Rake. How are the streets inhabited, sirrah?

Page. My lord, it's Sunday night, they are full of drunken citizens.

Rake. Along then, boys, we shall have a feast.

Bully. Along, noble knight.

Sir John. Ay—along, Bully; and he that says sir John Brute is not as drunk and as religious as the drunkenest citizen of them all—is a liar, and the son of a whore.

Bully. Why, that was bravely spoke, and like a free-born Englishman.

Sir John. What's that to you, sir, whether I am an Englishman or a Frenchman?

Bully. Zoons, you are not angry, sir?

Sir John. Zoons, I am angry, sir!—for if I'm a free-born Englishman, what have you to do, even to talk of my privileges?

Rake. Why, prithee, knight, don't quarrel here, leave private animosities to be decided by daylight; let the night be employed against the public enemy.

Sir John. My lord, I respect you because you are a man of quality: but I'll make that fellow know, I am within a hair's-breadth as absolute by my privileges, as the king of France is by his prerogative. He by his prerogative takes money where it is not his due; I by my privilege refuse paying it where I owe it. Liberty and property, and Old England, huzza!

All. Huzza!

[*Exit* Sir JOHN, *reeling, the rest following him.*

SCENE III.—Lady BRUTE's *Bedchamber.*

Enter Lady BRUTE *and* BELINDA.

Lady Brute. Sure, it's late, Belinda; I begin to be sleepy.

Bel. Yes, 'tis near twelve. Will you go to bed?

Lady Brute. To bed, my dear! and by that time I am fallen into a sweet sleep (or perhaps a sweet dream, which is better and better) sir John will come home roaring drunk, and be overjoyed he finds me in a condition to be disturbed.

Bel. Oh, you need not fear him, he's in for all night. The servants say he is gone to drink with my lord Rake.

Lady Brute. Nay, 'tis not very likely, indeed, such suitable company should part presently. What hogs men turn, Belinda, when they grow weary of women!

Bel. And what owls they are whilst they are fond of 'em!

Lady Brute. But that we may forgive well enough, because they are so upon our accounts.

Bel. We ought to do so indeed, but 'tis a hard matter. For when a man is really in love he looks so insufferably silly, that though a woman liked him well enough before, she has then much ado to endure the sight of him. And this I take to be the reason why lovers are so generally ill used.

Lady Brute. Well, I own now, I'm well enough pleased to see a man look like an ass for me.

Bel. Ay, I'm pleased he should look like an ass too—that is, I am pleased with myself for making him look so.

Lady Brute. Nay, truly, I think if he'd find some other way to express his passion, 'twould be more to his advantage.

Bel. Yes; for then a woman might like his passion, and him too.

Lady Brute. Yet, Belinda, after all, a woman's life would be but a dull business, if 'twere not for men; and men that can look like asses too. We should never blame fate for the shortness of our days; our time would hang wretchedly upon our hands.

Bel. Why, truly, they do help us off with a good share on't. For were there no men in the world, o'my conscience, I should be no longer a-dressing than I'm a-saying my prayers; nay, though it were Sunday: for you know one may go to church without stays on.

Lady Brute. But don't you think emulation might do something? For every woman you see desires to be finer than her neighbour.

Bel. That's only that the men may like her better than her neighbour. No; if there were no men, adieu fine petticoats, we should be weary of wearing 'em.

Lady Brute. And adieu plays, we should be weary of seeing 'em.

Bel. Adieu Hyde-Park, the dust would choke us.

Lady Brute. Adieu St. James's, walking would tire us.

Bel. Adieu London, the smoke would stifle us.

Lady Brute. And adieu going to church, for religion would ne'er prevail with us.

Both. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Bel. Our confession is so very hearty, sure we merit absolution.

Lady Brute. Not unless we go through with't, and confess all. So, prithee, for the ease of our consciences, let's hide nothing.

Bel. Agreed.

Lady Brute. Why, then, I confess that I love to sit in the fore-front of a box; for, if one sits behind, there's two acts gone perhaps before one's found out. And when I am there, if I perceive the men whispering and looking upon me, you must know I cannot for my life forbear thinking they talk to my advantage. And that sets a thousand little tickling vanities on foot—

Bel. Just my case for all the world; but go on.

Lady Brute. I watch with impatience for the next jest in the play, that I may laugh and show my white teeth. If the poet has been dull, and the jest be long a-coming, I pretend to whisper one to my friend, and from thence fall into a little small discourse, in which I take occasion to show my face in all humours, brisk, pleased, serious, melancholy, languishing.—Not that what we say to one another causes any of these alterations; but—

Bel. Don't trouble yourself to explain; for, if I'm not mistaken, you and I have had some of these necessary dialogues before now, with the same intention.

Lady Brute. Why, I'll swear, Belinda, some people do give strange agreeable airs to their faces in speaking. Tell me true—did you never practise in the glass?

Bel. Why, did you?

Lady Brute. Yes, faith, many a time.

Bel. And I too, I own it; both how to speak myself, and how to look when others speak. But my glass and I could never yet agree what face I should make when they come blurt out with a nasty thing in a play. For all the men presently look upon the women, that's certain; so, laugh we must not, though our stays burst for't, because that's telling truth, and owning we understand the jest: and to look serious is so dull, when the whole house is a-laughing.

Lady Brute. Besides, that looking serious does really betray our knowledge in the matter as much as laughing with the company would do: for, if we did not understand the thing, we should naturally do like other people.

Bel. For my part, I always take that occasion to blow my nose.

Lady Brute. You must blow your nose half off then at some plays.

Bel. Why don't some reformer or other beat the poet for't?

Lady Brute. Because he is not so sure of our private approbation as of our public thanks. Well, sure, there is not upon earth so impertinent a thing as women's modesty.

Bel. Yes; men's *fantasque*, that obliges us to it. If we quit our modesty, they say we lose our charms; and yet they know that very modesty is affectation, and rail at our hypocrisy.

Lady Brute. Thus one would think 'twere a hard matter to please 'em, niece: yet our kind mother nature has given us something that makes amends for all. Let our weakness be what it will, mankind will still be weaker; and whilst there is a world 'tis woman that will govern it. But, prithee, one word of poor Constant before we go to bed, if it be but to furnish matter for dreams.—I dare swear he's talking of me now, or thinking of me at least, though it be in the middle of his prayers.

Bel. So he ought, I think; for you were pleased to make him a good round advance to-day, madam.

Lady Brute. Why, I have e'en plagued him enough to satisfy any reasonable woman. He has besieged me these two years to no purpose.

Bel. And if he besieged you two years more, he'd be well enough paid, so he had the plundering of you at last.

Lady Brute. That may be: but I'm afraid the town won't be able to hold out much longer: for, to confess the truth to you, Belinda, the garrison begins to grow mutinous.

Bel. Then the sooner you capitulate the better.

Lady Brute. Yet, methinks, I would fain stay a little longer to see you fixed too, that we might start together, and see who could love longest. What think you, if Heartfree should have a month's mind to you?

Bel. Why, faith, I could almost be in love with him for despising that foolish, affected lady Fancy-

ful; but I'm afraid he's too cold ever to warm himself by my fire.

Lady Brute. Then he deserves to be froze to death. Would I were a man for your sake, dear rogue. [*Kissing her.*

Bel. You'd wish yourself a woman again for your own, or the men are mistaken. But if I could make a conquest of this son of Bacchus, and rival his bottle, what should I do with him? He has no fortune, I can't marry him; and sure you would not have me commit fornication.

Lady Brute. Why, if you did, child, 'twould be but a good friendly part; if 'twere only to keep me in countenance whilst I commit—you know what.

Bel. Well, if I can't resolve to serve you that way, I may perhaps some other as much to your satisfaction. But pray, how shall we contrive to see these blades again quickly?

Lady Brute. We must e'en have recourse to the old way; make 'em an appointment 'twixt jest and earnest, 'twill look like a frolic, and that you know 's a very good thing to save a woman's blushes.

Bel. You advise well; but where shall it be?

Lady Brute. In Spring-Garden. But they shan't know their women till their women pull off their masks; for a surprise is the most agreeable thing in the world: and I find myself in a very good humour, ready to do 'em any good turn I can think on.

Bel. Then pray write 'em the necessary billet without further delay.

Lady Brute. Let's go into your chamber, then, and whilst you say your prayers, I'll do it, child. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Covent-Garden* *.

Enter Lord RAKE, Sir JOHN BRUTE, Colonel BULLY, *and others, with drawn swords.*

Rake. Is the dog dead?

Bully. No, damn him! I heard him wheeze.

Rake. How the witch his wife howled!

Bully. Ay, she'll alarm the watch presently.

Rake. Appear, knight, then; come, you have a good cause to fight for, there's a man murdered.

Sir John. Is there! then let his ghost be satisfied, for I'll sacrifice a constable to it presently, and burn his body upon his wooden chair.

Enter a Tailor, *with a bundle under his arm.*

Bully. How now! what have we got here? a thief!

Tailor. No, an't please you, I'm no thief.

Rake. That we'll see presently.—Here, let the general examine him.

Sir John. Ay, ay, let me examine him, and I'll lay a hundred pound I find him guilty in spite of his teeth—for he looks—like a—sneaking rascal.—Come, sirrah, without equivocation or mental reservation, tell me of what opinion you are, and what calling; for by them—I shall guess at your morals.

Tail. An't please you, I'm a dissenting journeyman tailor.

Sir John. Then, sirrah, you love lying by your religion, and theft by your trade; and so that your punishment may be suitable to your crimes—I'll have you first gagged—and then hanged.

Tail. Pray, good worthy gentlemen, don't abuse me; indeed I'm an honest man, and a good workman, though I say it that should not say it.

Sir John. No words, sirrah, but attend your fate.

Rake. Let me see what's in that bundle.

Tail. An't please you, it's the doctor of the parish's gown.

Rake. The doctor's gown!—Hark you, knight, you won't stick at abusing the clergy, will you?

Sir John. No, I'm drunk, and I'll abuse anything—but my wife; and her I name—with reverence.

Rake. Then you shall wear this gown whilst you charge the watch; that though the blows fall upon you, the scandal may light upon the church.

Sir John. A generous design—by all the gods!—give it me. [*Takes the gown, and puts it on.*

Tail. O dear gentlemen, I shall be quite undone, if you take the gown.

Sir John. Retire, sirrah: and since you carry off your skin—go home, and be happy.

Tail. [*Pausing.*] I think I had e'en as good follow the gentleman's friendly advice; for if I dispute any longer, who knows but the whim may take him to case me? These courtiers are fuller of tricks than they are of money; they'll sooner cut a man's throat than pay his bill. [*Exit.*

Sir John. So, how do you like my shapes now?

Rake. This will do to a miracle; he looks like a bishop going to the holy war.—But to your arms, gentlemen, the enemy appears.

Enter Constable *and* Watchmen.

Watchman. Stand! Who goes there? Come before the constable.

Sir John. The constable's a rascal—and you are the son of a whore!

Watch. A good civil answer for a parson, truly!

Constable. Methinks, sir, a man of your coat might set a better example.

Sir John. Sirrah, I'll make you know—there are men of my coat can set as bad examples—as you can do, you dog you!

[Sir JOHN *strikes the* Constable. *They knock him down, disarm him, and seize him.* Lord RAKE *and the rest run away.*

Con. So, we have secured the parson, however.

Sir John. Blood, and blood—and blood!

Watch. Lord have mercy upon us! how the wicked wretch raves of blood. I'll warrant he has been murdering somebody to-night.

Sir John. Sirrah, there's nothing got by murder but a halter. My talent lies towards drunkenness and simony.

Watch. Why, that now was spoke like a man of parts, neighbours, it's pity he should be so disguised.

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* See page 364.

Sir John. You lie!—I'm not disguised, for I am drunk barefaced.

Watch. Look you there again!—This is a mad parson, Mr. Constable; I'll lay a pot of ale upon's head, he's a good preacher.

Con. Come, sir, out of respect to your calling, I shan't put you into the round-house; but we must secure you in our drawing-room till morning, that you may do no mischief. So, come along.

Sir John. You may put me where you will, sirrah, now you have overcome me.—But if I can't do mischief, I'll think of mischief—in spite of your teeth, you dog you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—Heartfree's *Lodgings.*

Enter Heartfree.

Heart. What the plague ails me?—Love? No, I thank you for that, my heart's rock still.—Yet 'tis Belinda that disturbs me; that's positive.—Well, what of all that? Must I love her for being troublesome? at that rate I might love all the women I meet, egad. But hold!—though I don't love her for disturbing me, yet she may disturb me because I love her.—Ay, that may be, faith. I have dreamed of her, that's certain.—Well, so I have of my mother; therefore, what's that to the purpose? Ay, but Belinda runs in my mind waking.—And so does many a damned thing that I don't care a farthing for.—Methinks, though, I would fain be talking to her, and yet I have no business.—Well, am I the first man that has had a mind to do an impertinent thing?

Enter Constant.

Const. How now, Heartfree! what makes you up and dressed so soon? I thought none but lovers quarreled with their beds; I expected to have found you snoring, as I used to do.

Heart. Why, faith, friend, 'tis the care I have of your affairs that makes me so thoughtful; I have been studying all night how to bring your matter about with Belinda.

Const. With Belinda!

Heart. With my lady, I mean:—and faith I have mighty hopes on't. Sure you must be very well satisfied with her behaviour to you yesterday?

Const. So well, that nothing but a lover's fears can make me doubt of success. But what can this sudden change proceed from?

Heart. Why, you saw her husband beat her, did you not?

Const. That's true: a husband is scarce to be borne upon any terms, much less when he fights with his wife. Methinks she should e'en have cuckolded him upon the very spot, to show that after the battle she was master of the field.

Heart. A council of war of women would infallibly have advised her to't. But, I confess, so agreeable a woman as Belinda deserves a better usage.

Const. Belinda again!

Heart. My lady, I mean.—What a pox makes me blunder so to-day?—[*Aside.*] A plague of this treacherous tongue!

Const. Prithee look upon me seriously, Heartfree.—Now answer me directly. Is it my lady or Belinda employs your careful thoughts thus?

Heart. My lady, or Belinda!

Const. In love! by this light, in love!

Heart. In love!

Const. Nay, ne'er deny it; for thou'lt do it so awkwardly, 'twill but make the jest sit heavier about thee. My dear friend, I give thee much joy.

Heart. Why, prithee, you won't persuade me to it, will you?

Const. That she's mistress of your tongue, that's plain; and I know you are so honest a fellow, your tongue and heart always go together. But how—but how the devil,—pha! ha! ha! ha!—

Heart. Heyday! why sure you don't believe it in earnest?

Const. Yes I do, because I see you deny it in jest.

Heart. Nay, but look you, Ned—a—deny in jest—a—gadzooks, you know I say—a—when a man denies a thing in jest—a—

Const. Pha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Heart. Nay, then we shall have it. What, because a man stumbles at a word! Did you never make a blunder?

Const. Yes, for I am in love, I own it.

Heart. Then so am I. Now laugh till thy soul's glutted with mirth.—[*Embracing him.*] But, dear Constant, don't tell the town on't.

Const. Nay then, 'twere almost pity to laugh at thee, after so honest a confession. But tell us a little, Jack, by what new-invented arms has this mighty stroke been given?

Heart. E'en by that unaccountable weapon, called *Je-ne-sais-quoi*: for everything that can come within the verge of beauty I have seen it with indifference.

Const. So in few words then; the *Je-ne-sais-quoi* has been too hard for the quilted petticoat.

Heart. Egad, I think the *Je-ne-sais-quoi* is in the quilted petticoat; at least 'tis certain I ne'er think on't without—a—a *Je-ne-sais-quoi* in every part about me.

Const. Well, but have all your remedies lost their virtue? have you turned her inside out yet?

Heart. I dare not so much as think on't.

Const. But don't the two years' fatigue I have had discourage you?

Heart. Yes: I dread what I foresee, yet cannot quit the enterprise. Like some soldiers, whose courage dwells more in their honour than their nature. On they go, though the body trembles at what the soul makes it undertake.

Const. Nay, if you expect your mistress will use you, as your profanations against her sex deserve, you tremble justly. But how do you intend to proceed, friend?

Heart. Thou knowest I'm but a novice; be friendly and advise me.

Const. Why, look you, then; I'd have you—serenade and a—write a song—go to church—look like a fool—be very officious—ogle—write—and lead out: and who knows, but in a year or two's time, you may be—called a troublesome puppy, and sent about your business?

Heart. That's hard.

Const. Yet thus it oft falls out with lovers, sir.

Heart. Pox on me for making one of the number.

Const. Have a care: say no saucy things; 'twill but augment your crime; and if your mistress hears on't, increase your punishment.

Heart. Prithee, say something then to encourage me: you know I helped you in your distress.

Const. Why, then, to encourage you to perseverance, though you may be throughly ill used for your offences; I'll put you in mind, that even the coyest ladies of 'em all are made up of desires, as well as we; and though they do hold out a long time, they will capitulate at last. For that thundering engineer, Nature, does make such havoc in the town, they must surrender at long-run, or perish in their own flames.

Enter a Footman.

Foot. Sir, there's a porter without with a letter; he desires to give it into your own hands.

Const. Call him in. [*Exit* Footman.

Enter JOE.

Const. What, Joe! is it thee?

Joe. An't please you, sir, I was ordered to deliver this into your own hands, by two well-shaped ladies, at the New Exchange. I was at your honour's lodgings, and your servants sent me hither.

Const. 'Tis well. Are you to carry any answer?

Joe. No, my noble master. They gave me my orders, and whip, they were gone, like a maidenhead at fifteen.

Const. Very well; there. [*Gives him money.*

Joe. God bless your honour. [*Exit.*

Const. Now let's see what honest trusty Joe has brought us.—[*Reads.*] *If you and your play-fellow can spare time from your business and devotions, don't fail to be at Spring-Garden about eight in the evening. You'll find nothing there but women, so you need bring no other arms than what you usually carry about you.*—So, play-fellow: here's something to stay your stomach till your mistress's dish is ready for you.

Heart. Some of our old battered acquaintance. I won't go, not I.

Const. Nay, that you can't avoid: there's honour in the case; 'tis a challenge, and I want a second.

Heart. I doubt I shall be but a very useless one to you; for I'm so disheartened by this wound Belinda has given me, I don't think I shall have courage enough to draw my sword.

Const. Oh, if that be all, come along; I'll warrant you find sword enough for such enemies as we have to deal withal.

SCENE III *.—*The Street before the* Justice's *House.*

Enter Constable *and* Watchmen, *with* SIR JOHN BRUTE.

Con. Come along, sir; I thought to have let you slip this morning, because you were a minister: but you are as drunk and abusive as ever. We'll see what the justice of the peace will say to you.

Sir John. And you shall see what I'll say to the justice of the peace, sirrah. [*They knock at the door.*

Enter Servant.

Con. Pray acquaint his worship we have got an unruly parson here. We are unwilling to expose him, but don't know what to do with him.

Serv. I'll acquaint my master. [*Exit.*

Sir John. You—constable—what damned justice is this?

Con. One that will take care of you, I warrant you.

Enter Justice.

Just. Well, Mr. Constable, what's the disorder here?

Con. An't please your worship—

Sir John. Let me speak, and be damned!—I'm a divine, and can unfold mysteries better than you can do.

Just. Sadness, sadness! a minister so overtaken! Pray, sir, give the constable leave to speak, and I'll hear you very patiently; I assure you, sir, I will.

Sir John. Sir—you are a very civil magistrate: your most humble servant.

Con. An't please your worship then, he has attempted to beat the watch to-night, and swore—

Sir John. You lie!

Just. Hold, pray sir, a little.

Sir John. Sir, your very humble servant.

Con. Indeed, sir, he came at us without any provocation, called us whores and rogues, and laid us on with a great quarter-staff. He was in my lord Rake's company: they have been playing the devil to-night.

Just. Hem—hem—pray, sir—may you be chaplain to my lord?

Sir John. Sir—I presume—I may if I will.

Just. My meaning, sir, is—are you so?

Sir John. Sir—you mean very well.

Just. He—hem—hem—under favour, sir, pray answer me directly.

Sir John. Under favour, sir—do you use to answer directly when you are drunk?

Just. Good lack, good lack! here's nothing to be got from him.—Pray, sir, may I crave your name?

Sir John. Sir—my name 's—[*He hiccups.*]—Hiccup, sir.

Just. Hiccup! Doctor Hiccup! I have known a great many country parsons of that name, especially down in the Fens.—Pray where do you live, sir?

Sir John. Here——and there, sir.

Just. Why, what a strange man is this!—Where do you preach, sir? have you any cure?

Sir John. Sir—I have—a very good cure—for a clap, at your service.

Just. Lord have mercy upon us!

Sir John. [*Aside.*] This fellow does ask so many impertinent questions, I believe, egad, 'tis the justice's wife in the justice's clothes.

Just. Mr. Constable, I vow and protest I don't know what to do with him.

Con. Truly he has been but a troublesome guest to us all night.

Just. I think I had e'en best let him go about his business, for I'm unwilling to expose him.

Con. E'en what your worship thinks fit.

Sir John. Sir—not to interrupt Mr. Constable, I have a small favour to ask.

Just. Sir, I open both my ears to you.

Sir John. Sir, your very humble servant. I have a little urgent business calls upon me; and therefore I desire the favour of you to bring matters to a conclusion.

Just. Sir, if I were sure that business were not to commit more disorders, I would release you.

Sir John. None—by my priesthood.

Just. Then, Mr. Constable, you may discharge him.

* See page 364.

Sir John. Sir, your very humble servant. If you please to accept of a bottle—

Just. I thank you kindly, sir; but I never drink in a morning. Good bye to ye, sir, good bye to ye.

Sir John. Good bye t'ye, good sir.—[*Exit* Justice.] So—now, Mr. Constable, shall you and I go pick up a whore together?

Con. No, thank you, sir; my wife's enough to satisfy any reasonable man.

Sir John. [*Aside.*] He! he! he! he! he!—the fool is married then.—[*Aloud.*] Well, you won't go?

Con. Not I, truly.

Sir John. Then I'll go by myself; and you and your wife may be damned! [*Exit.*

Con. [*Gazing after him.*] Why, God-a-mercy, parson! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Spring-Garden.*

Constant *and* Heartfree *cross the stage. As they go off,* Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle *enter masked, and dogging them.*

Const. So: I think we are about the time appointed. Let us walk up this way. [*Exit with* Heartfree.

Lady Fan. Good! Thus far I have dogged 'em without being discovered. 'Tis infallibly some intrigue that brings them to Spring-Garden. How my poor heart is torn and racked with fear and jealousy! Yet let it be anything but that flirt Belinda, and I'll try to bear it. But if it prove her, all that's woman in me shall be employed to destroy her. [*Exit with* Mademoiselle.

Re-enter Constant *and* Heartfree. Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle *still following at a distance.*

Const. I see no females yet that have anything to say to us. I'm afraid we are bantered.

Heart. I wish we were; for I'm in no humour to make either them or myself merry.

Const. Nay, I'm sure you'll make them merry enough if I tell 'em why you are dull. But prithee, why so heavy and sad before you begin to be ill used?

Heart. For the same reason, perhaps, that you are so brisk and well pleased; because both pains and pleasures are generally more considerable in prospect than when they come to pass.

Enter Lady Brute *and* Belinda, *masked, and poorly dressed.*

Const. How now, who are these? Not our game, I hope.

Heart. If they are, we are e'en well enough served to come a hunting here, when we had so much better game in chase elsewhere.

Lady Fan. [*To* Mademoiselle.] So, those are their ladies without doubt. But I'm afraid that doily stuff is not worn for want of better clothes. They are the very shape and size of Belinda and her aunt.

Mad. So day be inteed, matam.

Lady Fan. We'll slip into this close arbour, where we may hear all they say.

[*Exeunt* Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle.

Lady Brute. What, are you afraid of us, gentlemen?

Heart. Why truly, I think we may, if appearance don't lie.

Bel. Do you always find women what they appear to be, sir?

Heart. No, forsooth; but I seldom find 'em better than they appear to be.

Bel. Then the outside's best, you think?

Heart. 'Tis the honestest.

Const. Have a care, Heartfree; you are relapsing again.

Lady Brute. Why, does the gentleman use to rail at women?

Const. He has done formerly.

Bel. I suppose he had very good cause for't.—They did not use you so well as you thought you deserved, sir.

Lady Brute. They made themselves merry at your expense, sir.

Bel. Laughed when you sighed.

Lady Brute. Slept while you were waking.

Bel. Had your porter beat.

Lady Brute. And threw your billets-doux in the fire.

Heart. Heyday! I shall do more than rail presently.

Bel. Why, you won't beat us, will you?

Heart. I don't know but I may.

Const. What the devil's coming here? Sir John in a gown?—and drunk i'faith.

Enter Sir John Brute.

Sir John. What, a pox!—here's Constant, Heartfree—and two whores egad!—O you covetous rogues! what, have you never a spare punk for your friend?—But I'll share with you. [*He seizes both the ladies.*

Heart. Why, what the plague have you been doing, knight?

Sir John. Why, I have been beating the watch, and scandalising the clergy.

Heart. A very good account, truly!

Sir John. And what do you think I'll do next?

Const. Nay, that no man can guess.

Sir John. Why, if you'll let me sup with you, I'll treat both your strumpets.

Lady Brute. [*Aside*] O Lord, we are undone!

Heart. No, we can't sup together, because we have some affairs elsewhere. But if you'll accept of these two ladies, we'll be so complaisant to you, to resign our right in 'em.

Bel. [*Aside.*] Lord, what shall we do?

Sir John. Let me see, their clothes are such damned clothes, they won't pawn for the reckoning.

Heart. Sir John, your servant. Rapture attend you.

Const. Adieu, ladies! make much of the gentleman.

Lady Brute. Why, sure you won't leave us in the hands of a drunken fellow to abuse us!

Sir John. Who do you call a drunken fellow, you slut you? I'm a man of quality; the king has made me a knight.

Heart. Ay, ay, you are in good hands. Adieu! adieu! [*Runs off.*

Lady Brute. The devil's hands!—Let me go, or I'll—For Heaven's sake protect us!

[*She breaks from him, runs to* Constant, *twitching off her mask, and clapping it on again.*

Sir John. I'll devil you, you jade you! I'll demolish your ugly face!

Const. Hold a little, knight, she swoons.
Sir John. I'll swoon her!
Const. Hey, Heartfree!

Re-enter HEARTFREE. BELINDA *runs to him, and shows her face.*

Heart. O Heavens! My dear creature, stand there a little.

Const. [*Aside to* HEARTFREE.] Pull him off, Jack.

Heart. Hold, mighty man; look you, sir, we did but jest with you. These are ladies of our acquaintance, that we had a mind to frighten a little, but now you must leave us.

Sir John. Oons, I won't leave you, not I!

Heart. Nay, but you must though; and therefore make no words on't.

Sir John. Then you are a couple of damned uncivil fellows: and I hope your punks will give you sauce to your mutton! [*Exit.*

Lady Brute. Oh, I shall never come to myself again, I'm so frightened.

Const. 'Twas a narrow 'scape indeed.

Bel. Women must needs have frolics, you see, whatever they cost 'em.

Heart. This might have proved a dear one though.

Lady Brute. You are the more obliged to us, for the risk we run upon your accounts.

Const. And I hope you'll acknowledge something due to our knight-errantry, ladies. This is a second time we have delivered you.

Lady Brute. 'Tis true; and since we see fate has designed you for our guardians, 'twill make us the more willing to trust ourselves in your hands. But you must not have the worse opinion of us for our innocent frolic.

Heart. Ladies, you may command our opinions in everything that is to your advantage.

Bel. Then, sir, I command you to be of opinion, that women are sometimes better than they appear to be. [LADY BRUTE *and* CONSTANT *talk apart.*

Heart. Madam, you have made a convert of me in every thing. I'm grown a fool: I could be fond of a woman.

Bel. I thank you, sir, in the name of the whole sex.

Heart. Which sex nothing but yourself could ever have atoned for.

Bel. Now has my vanity a devilish itch to know in what my merit consists.

Heart. In your humility, madam, that keeps you ignorant it consists at all.

Bel. One other compliment with that serious face, and I hate you for ever after.

Heart. Some women love to be abused: is that it you would be at?

Bel. No, not that neither; but I'd have men talk plainly what's fit for women to hear; without putting 'em either to a real or an affected blush.

Heart. Why then, in as plain terms as I can find to express myself, I could love you even to—matrimony itself, a-most, egad.

Bel. Just as sir John did her ladyship there. What think you? Don't you believe one month's time might bring you down to the same indifference, only clad in a little better manners, perhaps? Well, you men are unaccountable things, mad till you have your mistresses, and then stark mad till you are rid of 'em again. Tell me, honestly, is not your patience put to a much severer trial after possession than before?

Heart. With a great many, I must confess, it is, to our eternal scandal; but I—dear creature, do but try me.

Bel. That's the surest way, indeed, to know, but not the safest.—[*To* LADY BRUTE.] Madam, are not you for taking a turn in the Great Walk? It's almost dark, nobody will know us.

Lady Brute. Really I find myself something idle, Belinda; besides I dote upon this little odd private corner. But don't let my lazy fancy confine you.

Const. [*Aside.*] So, she would be left alone with me; that's well.

Bel. Well, we'll take our turn, and come to you again.—[*To* HEARTFREE.] Come, sir, shall we go pry into the secrets of the garden? Who knows what discoveries we may make?

Heart. Madam, I'm at your service.

Const. [*Aside to* HEARTFREE.] Don't make too much haste back; for, d'ye hear—I may be busy.

Heart. Enough. [*Exit with* BELINDA.

Lady Brute. Sure you think me scandalously free, Mr. Constant. I'm afraid I shall lose your good opinion of me.

Const. My good opinion, madam, is like your cruelty, never to be removed.

Lady Brute. But if I should remove my cruelty, then there's an end of your good opinion.

Const. There is not so strict an alliance between 'em neither. 'Tis certain I should love you then better (if that be possible) than I do now; and where I love I always esteem.

Lady Brute. Indeed, I doubt you much. Why, suppose you had a wife, and she should entertain a gallant?

Const. If I gave her just cause, how could I justly condemn her?

Lady Brute. Ah, but you'd differ widely about just causes.

Const. But blows can bear no dispute.

Lady Brute. Nor ill manners much, truly.

Const. Then no woman upon earth has so just a cause as you have.

Lady Brute. Oh, but a faithful wife is a beautiful character.

Const. To a deserving husband I confess it is.

Lady Brute. But can his faults release my duty?

Const. In equity, without doubt. And where laws dispense with equity, equity should dispense with laws.

Lady Brute. Pray let's leave this dispute; for you men have as much witchcraft in your arguments as women have in their eyes.

Const. But whilst you attack me with your charms, 'tis but reasonable I assault you with mine.

Lady Brute. The case is not the same. What mischief we do we can't help, and therefore are to be forgiven.

Const. Beauty soon obtains pardon for the pain that it gives, when it applies the balm of compassion to the wound: but a fine face and a hard heart is almost as bad as an ugly face and a soft one; both very troublesome to many a poor gentleman.

Lady Brute. Yes, and to many a poor gentlewoman too, I can assure you. But pray, which of 'em is it that most afflicts you?

Const. Your glass and conscience will inform you, madam. But for Heaven's sake! (for now I must be serious) if pity or if gratitude can move you:—[*Taking her hand*] if constancy and truth have power to tempt you: if love, if adoration can affect you, give me at least some hopes that time may do what you perhaps mean never to perform; 'twill ease my sufferings, though not quench my flame.

Lady Brute. Your sufferings eased, your flame would soon abate; and that I would preserve, not quench it, sir.

Const. Would you preserve it, nourish it with favours; for that's the food it naturally requires.

Lady Brute. Yet on that natural food 'twould surfeit soon, should I resolve to grant all you would ask.

Const. And in refusing all you starve it. Forgive me, therefore, since my hunger rages, if I at last grow wild, and in my frenzy force at least this from you.—[*Kissing her hand.*] Or if you'd have my flame soar higher still, then grant me this, and this, and this—[*Kissing first her hand, then her neck*],—and thousands more.—[*Aside.*] For now's the time, she melts into compassion.

Lady Brute. [*Aside.*] Poor coward virtue, how it shuns the battle.—[*Aloud.*] O Heavens! let me go.

Const. Ay, go, ay: where shall we go, my charming angel?—Into this private arbour.—Nay, let's lose no time—moments are precious.

Lady Brute. And lovers wild. Pray let us stop here; at least for this time.

Const. 'Tis impossible. He that has power over you can have none over himself.

[*As he is forcing her into the arbour,* Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle *rush out upon them, and run over the stage.*

Lady Brute. Ah, I'm lost!

Lady Fan. Fi! fi! fi! fi! fi!

Mad. Fi! fi! fi! fi! fi!

[*Exit with* Lady Fancyful.

Const. Death and furies! who are these?

Lady Brute. O Heavens! I'm out of my wits: if they knew me, I am ruined.

Const. Don't be frightened! ten thousand to one they are strangers to you.

Lady Brute. Whatever they are, I won't stay here a moment longer.

Const. Whither will you go?

Lady Brute. Home, as if the devil were in me.—Lord! where's this Belinda now?

Re-enter Belinda *and* Heartfree.

Oh! it's well you are come: I'm so frightened, my hair stands on end. Let's begone, for Heaven's sake!

Bel. Lord! what's the matter?

Lady Brute. The devil's the matter, we are discovered. Here's a couple of women have done the most impertinent thing!—Away! away! away! away! away!

[*Exit running, the others following.*

Re-enter Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle.

Lady Fan. Well, Mademoiselle, 'tis a prodigious thing how women can suffer filthy fellows to grow so familiar with 'em.

Mad. Ah, matam, il n'y a rien de si naturel.

Lady Fan. Fi! fi! fi! But oh my heart! O jealousy! O torture! I'm upon the rack. What shall I do? My lover's lost, I ne'er shall see him mine.—[*Pausing.*] But I may be revenged, and that's the same thing. Ah, sweet revenge! Thou welcome thought, thou healing balsam to my wounded soul, be but propitious on this one occasion, I'll place my heaven in thee for all my life to come.

To woman how indulgent nature's kind!
No blast of fortune long disturbs her mind:
Compliance to her fate supports her still;
If love won't make her happy—mischief will.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Lady Fancyful's *House.*

Enter Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle.

Lady Fan. Well, Mademoiselle; did you dog the filthy things?

Mad. O que oui, matam.

Lady Fan. And where are they?

Mad. Au logis.

Lady Fan. What, men and all?

Mad. Tous ensemble.

Lady Fan. O confidence! what, carry their fellows to their own house?

Mad. C'est que le mari n'y est pas.

Lady Fan. No, so I believe, truly. But he shall be there, and quickly too, if I can find him out. Well, 'tis a prodigious thing, to see when men and women get together, how they fortify one another in their impudence. But if that drunken fool, her husband, be to be found in e'er a tavern in town, I'll send him amongst 'em. I'll spoil their sport!

Mad. En vérité, matam, ce seroit dommage.

Lady Fan. 'Tis in vain to oppose it, Mademoiselle; therefore never go about it. For I am the steadiest creature in the world—when I have determined to do mischief. So, come along. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Sir John Brute's *House.*

Enter Constant, Heartfree, Lady Brute, Belinda, *and* Lovewell.

Lady Brute. But are you sure you don't mistake, Lovewell?

Love. Madam, I saw 'em all go into the tavern together, and my master was so drunk he could scarce stand. [*Exit.*

Lady Brute. Then, gentlemen, I believe we may venture to let you stay, and play at cards with us an hour or two: for they'll scarce part till morning

Bel. I think 'tis a pity they should ever part. . .

Const. The company that's here, madam.

Lady Brute. Then, sir, the company that's here must remember to part itself in time.

Const. Madam, we don't intend to forfeit your future favours by indiscreet usage of this. The moment you give us the signal, we shan't fail to make our retreat.

Lady Brute. Upon those conditions then let us sit down to cards.

Re-enter LOVEWELL.

Love. O Lord, madam! here's my master just staggering in upon you; he has been quarrelsome yonder, and they have kicked him out of the company.

Lady Brute. Into the closet, gentlemen, for Heaven's sake! I'll wheedle him to bed, if possible.

[CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE *run into the closet.*

Enter SIR JOHN BRUTE, *all dirt and bloody.*

Lady Brute. Ah—ah—he's all over blood!

Sir John. What the plague does the woman—squall for? Did you never see a man in pickle before?

Lady Brute. Lord, where have you been?

Sir John. I have been at—cuffs.

Lady Brute. I fear that is not all. I hope you are not wounded.

Sir John. Sound as a roach, wife.

Lady Brute. I'm mighty glad to hear it.

Sir John. You know—I think you lie.

Lady Brute. I know you do me wrong to think so. For Heaven's my witness I had rather see my own blood trickle down than yours.

Sir John. Then will I be crucified.

Lady Brute. 'Tis a hard fate I should not be believed.

Sir John. 'Tis a damned atheistical age, wife.

Lady Brute. I am sure I have given you a thousand tender proofs how great my care is of you. Nay, spite of all your cruel thoughts, I'll still persist, and at this moment, if I can, persuade you to lie down, and sleep a little.

Sir John. Why—do you think I am drunk—you slut, you?

Lady Brute. Heaven forbid I should: but I'm afraid you are feverish. Pray let me feel your pulse.

Sir John. Stand off, and be damned!

Lady Brute. Why, I see your distemper in your very eyes. You are all on fire. Pray go to bed; let me entreat you.

Sir John. Come kiss me, then.

Lady Brute. [*Kissing him.*] There: now go.—[*Aside.*] He stinks like poison.

Sir John. I see it goes damnably against your stomach—and therefore—kiss me again.

Lady Brute. Nay, now you fool me.

Sir John. Do't, I say.

Lady Brute. [*Aside.*] Ah, Lord have mercy upon me!—[*Kisses him.*] Well; there: now will you go?

Sir John. Now, wife, you shall see my gratitude. You give me two kisses—I'll give you—two hundred. [*Kisses and tumbles her.*

Lady Brute. O Lord! Pray sir John be quiet. Heavens, what a pickle am I in!

Bel. [*Aside.*] If I were in her pickle, I'd call my gallant out of the closet, and he should cudgel him soundly.

Sir John. So, now you being as dirty and as nasty as myself, we may go pig together. But first I must have a cup of your cold-tea, wife.

[*Going to the closet.*

Lady Brute. [*Aside.*] Oh, I'm ruined!—[*Aloud.*] There's none there, my dear.

Sir John. I'll warrant you I'll find some, my dear.

Lady Brute. You can't open the door, the lock's spoiled; I have been turning and turning the key this half-hour to no purpose. I'll send for the smith to-morrow.

Sir John. There's ne'er a smith in Europe can open a door with more expedition than I can do.—As for example!—Pou.—[*He bursts open the door with his foot.*] How now! What the devil have we got here?—Constant!—Heartfree!—and two whores again, egad!—This is the worst cold-tea—that ever I met with in my life.—

Re-enter CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE.

Lady Brute. [*Aside.*] O Lord what will become of us?

Sir John. Gentlemen—I am your very humble servant—I give you many thanks—I see you take care of my family—I shall do all I can to return the obligation.

Const. Sir, how oddly soever this business may appear to you, you would have no cause to be uneasy if you knew the truth of all things; your lady is the most virtuous woman in the world, and nothing has passed but an innocent frolic.

Heart. Nothing else, upon my honour, sir.

Sir John. You are both very civil gentlemen—and my wife, there, is a very civil gentlewoman; therefore I don't doubt but many civil things have passed between you. Your very humble servant!

Lady Brute. [*Aside to* CONSTANT.] Pray be gone: he's so drunk he can't hurt us to-night, and to-morrow morning you shall hear from us.

Const. [*Aside to* LADY BRUTE.] I'll obey you, madam.—[*Aloud.*] Sir, when you are cool, you'll understand reason better. So then I shall take the pains to inform you. If not—I wear a sword, sir, and so good-bye to you!—Come along, Heartfree. [*Exeunt* CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE.

Sir John. Wear a sword, sir!—And what of all that, sir?—He comes to my house; eats my meat; lies with my wife; dishonours my family; gets a bastard to inherit my estate—and when I ask a civil account of all this—Sir, says he, I wear a sword.—Wear a sword, sir! Yes, sir, says he, I wear a sword.—It may be a good answer at cross-purposes; but 'tis a damned one to a man in my whimsical circumstances—Sir, says he, I wear a sword!—[*To* Lady BRUTE.] And what do you wear now? ha! tell me.—[*Sitting down in a great-chair.*] What! you are modest, and can't.—Why then I'll tell you, you slut you! You wear—an impudent lewd face—a damned designing heart—and a tail—and a tail full of—

[*He falls fast asleep snoring.*

Lady Brute. So; thanks to kind Heaven, he's fast for some hours.

Bel. 'Tis well he is so, that we may have time to lay our story handsomely; for we must lie like the devil to bring ourselves off.

Lady Brute. What shall we say, Belinda?

Bel. [*Musing.*] I'll tell you: it must all light upon Heartfree and I. We'll say he has courted

me some time, but for reasons unknown to us has ever been very earnest the thing might be kept from sir John. That therefore hearing him upon the stairs he run into the closet, though against our will, and Constant with him, to prevent jealousy. And to give this a good impudent face of truth, (that I may deliver you from the trouble you are in), I'll e'en (if he pleases) marry him.

Lady Brute. I'm beholden to you, cousin : but that would be carrying the jest a little too far for your own sake. You know he's a younger brother, and has nothing.

Bel. 'Tis true : but I like him, and have fortune enough to keep above extremity. I can't say I would live with him in a cell, upon love and bread and butter : but I had rather have the man I love, and a middle state of life, than that gentleman in the chair there, and twice your ladyship's splendour.

Lady Brute. In truth, niece, you are in the right on't : for I am very uneasy with my ambition. But perhaps, had I married as you'll do, I might have been as ill used.

Bel. Some risk, I do confess, there always is : but if a man has the least spark, either of honour or good-nature, he can never use a woman ill, that loves him, and makes his fortune both. Yet I must own to you, some little struggling I still have with this teasing ambition of ours. For pride, you know, is as natural to a woman, as 'tis to a saint. I can't help being fond of this rogue ; and yet it goes to my heart to think I must never whisk to Hyde-park with above a pair of horses ; have no coronet upon my coach, nor a page to carry up my train. But above all—that business of place.—Well ; taking place is a noble prerogative.

Lady Brute. Especially after a quarrel.

Bel. Or of a rival. But pray say no more on't for fear I change my mind. For o' my conscience, were't not for your affair in the balance, I should go near to pick up some odious man of quality yet, and only take poor Heartfree for a gallant.

Lady Brute. Then him you must have, however things go ?

Bel. Yes.

Lady Brute. Why we may pretend what we will, but 'tis a hard matter to live without the man we love.

Bel. Especially when we are married to the man we hate. Pray tell me : do the men of the town ever believe us virtuous when they see us do so ?

Lady Brute. Oh, no : nor indeed hardly, let us do what we will. They most of 'em think, there is no such thing as virtue, considered in the strictest notions of it : and therefore when you hear 'em say, such a one is a woman of reputation, they only mean she's a woman of discretion. For they consider we have no more religion than they have, nor so much morality ; and between you and I, Belinda, I'm afraid the want of inclination seldom protects any of us.

Bel. But what think you of the fear of being found out ?

Lady Brute. I think that never kept any woman virtuous long. We are not such cowards neither. No : let us once pass fifteen, and we have too good an opinion of our own cunning to believe the world can penetrate into what we would keep a secret. And so in short we cannot reasonably blame the men for judging of us by themselves.

Bel. But sure we are not so wicked as they are after all ?

Lady Brute. We are as wicked, child, but our vice lies another way. Men have more courage than we, so they commit more bold impudent sins. They quarrel, fight, swear, drink, blaspheme, and the like ; whereas we, being cowards, only backbite, tell lies, cheat at cards, and so forth. But 'tis late : let's end our discourse for to-night, and out of an excess of charity take a small care of that nasty drunken thing there.—Do but look at him, Belinda.

Bel. Ah—'tis a savoury dish !

Lady Brute. As savoury as 'tis I'm cloyed with't. Prithee call the buttler to take it away.

Bel. Call the butler !—call the scavenger !—[*To a* Servant *within.*] Who's there ? Call Rasor ! Let him take away his master, scour him clean with a little soap and sand, and so put him to bed.

Lady Brute. Come, Belinda, I'll e'en lie with you to-night ; and in the morning we'll send for our gentlemen to set this matter even.

Bel. With all my heart.

Lady Brute. Good night, my dear !

[*Making a low curtsy to* Sir John.

Both. Ha ! ha ! ha ! [*Exeunt.*

Enter Rasor.

Ras. My lady there's a wag—my master there's a cuckold. Marriage is a slippery thing :—women have depraved appetites:—my lady's a wag. I have heard all ; I have seen all ; I understand all ; and I'll tell all ; for my little Frenchwoman loves news dearly. This story'll gain her heart, or nothing will.—[*To his Master.*] Come, sir, your head's too full of fumes at present to make room for your jealousy ; but I reckon we shall have rare work with you when your pate's empty. Come to your kennel, you cuckoldly drunken sot you !

[*Carries him out upon his back.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* Lady Fancyful's *House.*

Enter Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle.

Lady Fan. But why did not you tell me before, Mademoiselle, that Rasor and you were fond ?

Mad. De modesty hinder me, matam.

Lady Fan. Why, truly, modesty does often hinder us from doing things we have an extravagant mind to. But does he love you well enough yet to do anything you bid him ? Do you think to oblige you he would speak scandal ?

Mad. Matam, to oblige your ladyship, he shall speak blasphemy.

Lady Fan. Why then, Mademoiselle, I'll tell you what you shall do. You shall engage him to tell his master all that passed at Spring-garden : I have a mind he should know what a wife and a niece he has got.

Mad. Il le fera, matam.

Enter a Footman, *who speaks to* Mademoiselle *apart.*

Foot. Mademoiselle, yonder's Mr. Rasor desires to speak with you.

Mad. Tell him I come presently.—[*Exit* Footman.] Rasor be dare, matam.

Lady Fan. That's fortunate. Well, I'll leave you togethe.:. And if you find him stubborn, Mademoiselle—hark you—don't refuse him a few little reasonable liberties, to put him into humour.

Mad. Laissez-moi faire. [*Exit* Lady FANCYFUL.

RASOR *peeps in; and seeing* Lady FANCYFUL *gone, runs to* MADEMOISELLE, *takes her about the neck, and kisses her.*

Mad. How now, confidence!

Ras. How now, modesty!

Mad. Who make you so familiar, sirrah?

Ras. My impudence, hussy.

Mad. Stand off, rogue-face.

Ras. Ah—Mademoiselle—great news at our house.

Mad. Why what be de matter?

Ras. The matter!—why, uptails all's the matter.

Mad. Tu te moques de moi.

Ras. Now do you long to know the particulars—the time when—the place where—the manner how. But I won't tell you a word more.

Mad. Nay, den dou kill me, Rasor.

Ras. Come, kiss me, then. [*Clapping his hands behind him.*

Mad. Nay, pridee tell me.

Ras. Good bye to ye! [*Going.*

Mad. Hold, hold! I will kiss dee. [*Kissing him.*

Ras. So, that's civil. Why now, my pretty pall; my goldfinch: my little waterwagtail—you must know that—Come, kiss me again.

Mad. I won't kiss dee no more.

Ras. Good b'wy to ye!

Mad. Doucement. Dare: es tu content? [*Kissing him.*

Ras. So: now I'll tell thee all. Why the news is, that Cuckoldom in folio, is newly printed; and Matrimony in quarto is just going into the press. Will you buy any books, Mademoiselle?

Mad. Tu parles comme un libraire, de devil no understand dee.

Ras. Why then, that I may make myself intelligible to a waiting-woman, I'll speak like a valet-de-chambre. My lady has cuckolded my master.

Mad. Bon!

Ras. Which we take very ill from her hands, I can tell her that. We can't yet prove matter of fact upon her.

Mad. N'importe.

Ras. But we can prove that matter of fact had like to have been upon her.

Mad. Oui dà!

Ras. For we have such bloody circumstances.

Mad. Sans doute.

Ras. That any man of parts may draw tickling conclusions from 'em.

Mad. Fort bien.

Ras. We have found a couple of tight well-built gentlemen stuffed into her ladyship's closet.

Mad. Le diable!

Ras. And I, in my particular person, have discovered a most damnable plot, how to persuade my poor master, that all this hide and seek, this will-in-the-wisp, has no other meaning than a Christian marriage for sweet Mrs. Belinda.

Mad. Un mariage!—Ah les drolesses!

Ras. Don't you interrupt me, hussy. 'Tis agreed, I say, and my innocent lady, to wriggle herself out at the back-door of the business, turns marriage-bawd to her niece, and resolves to deliver up her fair body, to be tumbled and mumbled, by that young liquorish whipster Heartfree. Now are you satisfied?

Mad. No.

Ras. Right woman; always gaping for more.

Mad. Dis be all deu dat dou know?

Ras. All! ay, and a great deal too, I think.

Mad. Dou be fool, dou know noting. Ecoute, mon pauvre Rasor. Dou see des two eyes?—Des two eyes have see de devil.

Ras. The woman's mad!

Mad. In Spring-garden, dat rogue Constant meet dy lady.

Ras. Bon!

Mad. I'll tell dee no more.

Ras. Nay, prithee, my swan.

Mad. Come, kiss me den.

[*Clapping her hands behind her as he had done before.*

Ras. I won't kiss you, not I.

Mad. Adieu!

Ras. Hold!—[*Gives her a hearty kiss.*] Now proceed.

Mad. Ah, ça!—I hide myself in one cunning place, where I hear all, and see all. First dy drunken master come mal à-propos; but de sot no know his own dear wife, so he leave her to her sport.—Den de game begin. De lover say soft ting: de lady look upon de ground.—[*As she speaks,* RASOR *still acts the man, and she the woman.*] He take her by de hand: she turn her head on oder way. Den he squeeze very hard: den she pull—very softly. Den he take her in his arm: den she give him leetel pat. Den he kiss her tétons: den she say—Pish! nay, fi! Den he tremble: den she—sigh. Den he pull her into de arbour: den she pinch him.

Ras. Ay, but not so hard, you baggage you!

Mad. Den he grow bold: she grow weak. He tro her down, il tombe dessus, le diable assiste, il emporte tout.—[RASOR *struggles with her, as if he would throw her down.*] Stand off, sirrah.

Ras. You have set me a fire, you jade you!

Mad. Den go to de river and quench dyself.

Ras. What an unnatural harlot 'tis!

Mad. Rasor! [*Looking languishing on him.*

Ras. Mademoiselle!

Mad. Dou no love me?

Ras. Not love thee!—more than a Frenchman does soup.

Mad. Den dou will refuse noting dat I bid dee?

Ras. Don't bid me be damned then.

Mad. No, only tell dy master all I have tell dee of dy laty.

Ras. Why, you little malicious strumpet, you; should you like to be served so?

Mad. You dispute den?—Adieu!

Ras. Hold!—But why wilt thou make me be such a rogue, my dear?

Mad. Voilà un vrai Anglais! il est amoureux, et cependant il veut raisonner. Va-t'en au diable!

Ras. Hold once more! In hopes thou'lt give me up thy body, I resign thee up my soul.

Mad. Bon! écoute donc—If dou fail me—I never see dee more.—If dou obey me—je m'abandonne à toi.

[*Takes him about the neck and gives him a smacking kiss, and exit.*

Ras. [*Licking his lips.*] Not be a rogue?—*Amor vincit omnia!* [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Another Room in the same.*

Enter Lady Fancyful *and* Mademoiselle.

Lady Fan. Marry, say ye? will the two things marry?

Mad. On le va faire, matam.

Lady Fan. Look you, Mademoiselle, in short, I can't bear it.—No; I find I can't.—If once I see 'em a-bed together, I shall have ten thousand thoughts in my head will make me run distracted. Therefore run and call Rasor back immediately, for something must be done to stop this impertinent wedding. If I can defer it but four-and-twenty hours, I'll make such work about town, with that little pert slut's reputation, he shall as soon marry a witch.

Mad. [*Aside.*] La voilà bien intentionnée.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—Constant's *Lodgings.*

Enter Constant *and* Heartfree.

Const. But what dost think will come of this business?

Heart. 'Tis easier to think what will not come on't.

Const. What's that?

Heart. A challenge. I know the knight too well for that: his dear body will always prevail upon his noble soul to be quiet.

Const. But though he dare not challenge me, perhaps he may venture to challenge his wife.

Heart. Not if you whisper him in the ear, you won't have him do't, and there's no other way left that I see. For as drunk as he was, he'll remember you and I were where we should not be; and I don't think him quite blockhead enough yet to be persuaded we were got into his wife's closet only to peep in her prayer-book.

Enter Servant *with a letter.*

Serv. Sir, here's a letter; a porter brought it.

[*Exit.*

Const. O ho! here's instructions for us.—[*Reads.*] *The accident that has happened has touched our invention to the quick. We would fain come off without your help, but find that's impossible. In a word, the whole business must be thrown upon a matrimonial intrigue between your friend and mine. But if the parties are not fond enough to go quite through with the matter, 'tis sufficient for our turn they own the design. We'll find pretences enough to break the match. Adieu!*—Well, woman for invention! How long would my blockhead have been a producing this!—Hey, Heartfree! What musing, man! prithee be cheerful. What sayest thou, friend, to this matrimonial remedy?

Heart. Why I say it's worse than the disease.

Const. Here's a fellow for you! There's beauty and money on her side, and love up to the ears on his; and yet—

Heart. And yet, I think, I may reasonably be allowed to boggle at marrying the niece, in the very moment that you are debauching the aunt.

Const. Why truly there may be something in that. But have not you a good opinion enough of your own parts to believe you could keep a wife to yourself?

Heart. I should have, if I had a good opinion enough of hers, to believe she could do as much by me. For to do 'em right, after all, the wife seldom rambles till the husband shows her the way.

Const. 'Tis true; a man of real worth scarce ever is a cuckold but by his own fault. Women are not naturally lewd, there must be something to urge 'em to it. They'll cuckold a churl, out of revenge; a fool, because they despise him; a beast, because they loathe him. But when they make bold with a man they once had a well-grounded value for, 'tis because they first see themselves neglected by him.

Heart. Nay, were I well assured that I should never grow sir John, I ne'er should fear Belinda'd play my lady. But our weakness, thou knowest, my friend, consists in that very change we so impudently throw upon (indeed) a steadier and more generous sex.

Const. Why, faith, we are a little impudent in that matter, that's the truth on't. But this is wonderful, to see you grown so warm an advocate for those (but t'other day) you took so much pains to abuse!

Heart. All revolutions run into extremes; the bigot makes the boldest atheist; and the coyest saint, the most extravagant strumpet. But prithee advise me in this good and evil, this life and death, this blessing and cursing, that is set before me. Shall I marry—or die a maid?

Const. Why faith, Heartfree, matrimony is like an army going to engage. Love's the forlorn hope, which is soon cut off; the marriage-knot is the main body, which may stand buff a long long time; and repentance is the rear-guard, which rarely gives ground as long as the main battle has a being.

Heart. Conclusion then; you advise me to whore on as you do?

Const. That's not concluded yet. For though marriage be a lottery, in which there are a wondrous many blanks; yet there is one inestimable lot, in which the only heaven on earth is written. Would your kind fate but guide your hand to that, though I were wrapped in all that luxury itself could clothe me with, I still should envy you.

Heart. And justly, too: for to be capable of loving one, doubtless is better than to possess a thousand. But how far that capacity's in me, alas! I know not.

Const. But you would know?

Heart. I would so.

Const. Matrimony will inform you. Come, one flight of resolution carries you to the land of experience; where, in a very moderate time, you'll know the capacity of your soul and your body both, or I'm mistaken.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—*A Room in* Sir John Brute's *House.*

Enter Lady Brute *and* Belinda.

Bel. Well, madam, what answer have you from 'em?

Lady Brute. That they'll be here this moment. I fancy 'twill end in a wedding: I'm sure he's a fool if it don't. Ten thousand pound, and such a lass as you are, is no contemptible offer to a younger brother. But are not you under strange agitations? Prithee how does your pulse beat?

Bel. High and low, I have much ado to be valiant: sure it must feel very strange to go to bed to a man!

Lady Brute. Um—it does feel a little odd at first, but it will soon grow easy to you.

Enter CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE.

Lady Brute. Good-morrow, gentlemen! How have you slept after your adventure?

Heart. Some careful thoughts, ladies, on your accounts have kept us waking.

Bel. And some careful thoughts on your own, I believe, have hindered you from sleeping. Pray how does this matrimonial project relish with you?

Heart. Why faith e'en as storming towns does with soldiers, where the hopes of delicious plunder banishes the fear of being knocked on the head.

Bel. Is it then possible after all that you dare think of downright lawful wedlock?

Heart. Madam, you have made me so foolhardy I dare do anything.

Bel. Then, sir, I challenge you; and matrimony's the spot where I expect you.

Heart. 'Tis enough; I'll not fail.—[*Aside.*] So, now, I am in for Hobbes's voyage; a great leap in the dark.

Lady Brute. Well, gentlemen, this matter being concluded then, have you got your lessons ready? For sir John is grown such an atheist of late he'll believe nothing upon easy terms.

Const. We'll find ways to extend his faith, madam. But pray how do you find him this morning?

Lady Brute. Most lamentably morose, chewing the cud after last night's discovery; of which however he had but a confused notion e'en now. But I'm afraid the valet-de-chambre has told him all, for they are very busy together at this moment. When I told him of Belinda's marriage, I had no other answer but a grunt: from which you may draw what conclusions you think fit.—But to your notes, gentlemen, he's here.

Enter SIR JOHN BRUTE *and* RASOR.

Const. Good-morrow, sir.

Heart. Good-morrow, sir John. I'm very sorry my indiscretion should cause so much disorder in your family.

Sir John. Disorders generally come from indiscretions, sir; 'tis no strange thing at all.

Lady Brute. I hope, my dear, you are satisfied there was no wrong intended you.

Sir John. None, my dove.

Bel. If not, I hope my consent to marry Mr. Heartfree will convince you. For as little as I know of amours, sir, I can assure you, one intrigue is enough to bring four people together, without further mischief.

Sir John. And I know, too, that intrigues tend to procreation of more kinds than one. One intrigue will beget another as soon as beget a son or a daughter.

Const. I am very sorry, sir, to see you still seem unsatisfied with a lady whose more than common virtue, I am sure, were she my wife, should meet a better usage.

Sir John. Sir, if her conduct has put a trick upon her virtue, her virtue's the bubble, but her husband's the loser.

Const. Sir, you have received a sufficient answer already to justify both her conduct and mine. You'll pardon me for meddling in your family-affairs; but I perceive I am the man you are jealous of, and therefore it concerns me.

Sir John. Would it did not concern me, and then I should not care who it concerned.

Const. Well, sir, if truth and reason won't content you, I know but one way more, which, if you think fit, you may take.

Sir John. Lord, sir, you are very hasty. If I had been found at prayers in your wife's closet, I should have allowed you twice as much time to come to yourself in.

Const. Nay, sir, if time be all you want, we have no quarrel.

Heart. [*Aside to* CONSTANT.] I told you how the sword would work upon him. [SIR JOHN *muses.*

Const. [*Aside to* HEARTFREE.] Let him muse; however, I'll lay fifty pound our foreman brings us in, Not Guilty.

Sir John. [*Aside.*] 'Tis well—'tis very well.—In spite of that young jade's matrimonial intrigue, I am a downright stinking cuckold.—Here they are—Boo!—[*Putting his hand to his forehead.*] Methinks I could butt with a bull. What the plague did I marry her for? I knew she did not like me; if she had, she would have lain with me; for I would have done so because I liked her: but that's past, and I have her. And now, what shall I do with her?—If I put my horns in my pocket, she'll grow insolent.—If I don't, that goat there, that stallion, is ready to whip me through the guts.—The debate, then, is reduced to this; shall I die a hero? or live a rascal?—Why, wiser men than I have long since concluded, that a living dog is better than a dead lion.—[*Aloud.*] Gentlemen, now my wine and my passion are governable, I must own, I have never observed anything in my wife's course of life to back me in my jealousy of her: but jealousy's a mark of love; so she need not trouble her head about it, as long as I make no more words on't.

Enter Lady FANCYFUL *disguised; she addresses* BELINDA *apart.*

Const. I'm glad to see your reason rule at last. Give me your hand: I hope you'll look upon me as you are wont.

Sir John. Your humble servant.—[*Aside.*] A wheedling son of a whore!

Heart. And that I may be sure you are friends with me too, pray give me your consent to wed your niece.

Sir John. Sir, you have it with all my heart: damn me if you han't!—[*Aside.*] 'Tis time to get rid of her:—a young pert pimp! she'll make an incomparable bawd in a little time.

Enter a Servant, *who gives* HEARTFREE *a letter.*

Bel. Heartfree your husband, say you? 'tis impossible.

Lady Fan. Would to kind Heaven it were: but 'tis too true; and in the world there lives not such a wretch. I'm young; and either I have been flattered by my friends, as well as glass, or nature has been kind and generous to me. I had a fortune too was greater far than he could ever hope for; but with my heart I am robbed of all the rest. I'm slighted and I'm beggared both at once; I have scarce a bare subsistence from the villain,

yet dare complain to none; for he has sworn, if e'er 'tis known I am his wife, he'll murder me. [*Pretends to weep.*

Bel. The traitor!

Lady Fan. I accidentally was told he courted you; charity soon prevailed upon me to prevent your misery; and as you see, I'm still so generous even to him, as not to suffer he should do a thing for which the law might take away his life. [*Pretends to weep.*

Bel. Poor creature! how I pity her! [*They continue talking aside.*

Heart. [*Aside.*] Death and damnation!—Let me read it again.—[*Reads.*] *Though I have a particular reason not to let you know who I am till I see you; yet you'll easily believe 'tis a faithful friend that gives you this advice—I have lain with Belinda.*—Good!—*I have a child by her.*—Better and better!—*which is now at nurse;*—Heaven be praised!—*and I think the foundation laid for another.*—Ha! — Old Truepenny!—*No rack could have tortured this story from me, but friendship has done it. I heard of your design to marry her, and could not see you abused. Make use of my advice, but keep my secret till I ask you for't again. Adieu.* [*Exit* Lady FANCYFUL.

Const. [*To* BELINDA.] Come, madam, shall we send for the parson? I doubt here's no business for the lawyer. Younger brothers have nothing to settle but their hearts, and that I believe my friend here has already done very faithfully.

Bel. [*Scornfully.*] Are you sure, sir, there are no old mortgages upon it?

Heart. [*Coldly.*] If you think there are, madam, it mayn't be amiss to defer the marriage till you are sure they are paid off.

Bel. [*Aside.*] How the galled horse kicks!—[*To* HEARTFREE.] We'll defer it as long as you please, sir.

Heart. The more time we take to consider on't, madam, the less apt we shall be to commit oversights; therefore, if you please, we'll put it off for just nine months.

Bel. Guilty consciences make men cowards; I don't wonder you want time to resolve.

Heart. And they make women desperate; I don't wonder you were so quickly determined.

Bel. What does the fellow mean?

Heart. What does the lady mean?

Sir John. Zoons! what do you both mean? [HEARTFREE *and* BELINDA *walk chafing about.*

Ras. [*Aside.*] Here's so much sport going to be spoiled, it makes me ready to weep again. A pox o' this impertinent Lady Fancyful and her plots, and her Frenchwoman, too! she's a whimsical, ill-natured bitch; and when I have got my bones broke in her service, 'tis ten to one but my recompense is a clap; I hear 'em tittering without still. Ecod, I'll e'en go lug 'em both in by the ears, and discover the plot, to secure my pardon. [*Exit.*

Const. Prithee, explain, Heartfree.

Heart. A fair deliverance, thank my stars and my friend.

Bel. 'Tis well it went no farther; a base fellow!

Lady Brute. What can be the meaning of all this?

Bel. What's his meaning I don't know; but mine is, that if I had married him—I had had no husband.

Heart. And what's her meaning I don't know; but mine is, that if I had married her—I had had wife enough.

Sir John. Your people of wit have got such cramp ways of expressing themselves, they seldom comprehend one another. Pox take you both! will you speak that you may be understood?

Re-enter RASOR, *in sackcloth, pulling in* Lady FANCYFUL *and* MADEMOISELLE, *both masked.*

Ras. If they won't, here comes an interpreter.

Lady Brute. Heavens! what have we here?

Ras. A villain—but a repenting villain. Stuff which saints in all ages have been made of.

All. Rasor!

Lady Brute. What means this sudden metamorphose?

Ras. Nothing, without my pardon.

Lady Brute. What pardon do you want?

Ras. *Imprimis*, your ladyship's; for a damnable lie made upon your spotless virtue, and set to the tune of Spring-Garden.—[*To* Sir JOHN.] Next, at my generous master's feet I bend, for interrupting his more noble thoughts with phantoms of disgraceful cuckoldom.—[*To* CONSTANT.] Thirdly, I to this gentleman apply for making him the hero of my romance.—[*To* HEARTFREE.] Fourthly, your pardon, noble sir, I ask, for clandestinely marrying you, without either bidding of banns, bishop's licence, friends' consent—or your own knowledge. [*To* BELINDA.] And lastly, to my good young lady's clemency I come, for pretending the corn was sowed in the ground, before ever the plough had been in the field.

Sir John. [*Aside.*] So that after all, 'tis a moot point, whether I am a cuckold or not.

Bel. Well, sir, upon condition you confess all, I'll pardon you myself, and try to obtain as much from the rest of the company. But I must know then who 'tis has put you upon all this mischief?

Ras. Satan and his equipage; woman tempted me, lust weakened me—and so the devil overcame me; as fell Adam, so fell I.

Bel. Then pray, Mr. Adam, will you make us acquainted with your Eve?

Ras. [*To* MADEMOISELLE.] Unmask, for the honour of France.

All. Mademoiselle!

Mad. Me ask ten tousand pardon of all de good company.

Sir John. Why this mystery thickens, instead of clearing up.—[*To* RASOR.] You son of a whore you, put us out of our pain.

Ras. One moment brings sunshine.—[*Pointing to* MADEMOISELLE.] 'Tis true this is the woman that tempted me; but this is the serpent that tempted the woman; and if my prayers might be heard, her punishment for so doing should be like the serpent's of old.—[*Pulls off* Lady FANCYFUL'S *mask.*] She should lie upon her face all the days of her life.

All. Lady Fancyful!

Bel. Impertinent!

Lady Brute. Ridiculous!

All. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Bel. I hope your ladyship will give me leave to wish you joy, since you have owned your marriage yourself.—[*To* HEARTFREE.] I vow 'twas strangely wicked in you to think of another wife, when you had one already so charming as her ladyship.

All. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] Confusion seize 'em, as it seizes me!

Mad. [*Aside.*] Que le diable étouffe ce marand de Rasor!

Bel. Your ladyship seems disordered; a breeding qualm, perhaps.—Mr. Heartfree, your bottle of Hungary water to your lady.—Why, madam, he stands as unconcerned as if he were your husband in earnest.

Lady Fan. Your mirth's as nauseous as yourself, Belinda. You think you triumph over a rival now: hélas! ma pauvre fille. Where'er I'm rival there's no cause for mirth. No, my poor wretch, 'tis from another principle I have acted. I knew that thing there would make so perverse a husband, and you so impertinent a wife, that lest your mutual plagues should make you both run mad, I charitably would have broke the match. He! he! he! he! he!

[*Exit laughing affectedly,* MADEMOISELLE *following her.*

Mad. He! he! he! he! he!

All. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Sir John. [*Aside.*] Why now this woman will be married to somebody too.

Bel. Poor creature! what a passion she's in! but I forgive her.

Heart. Since you have so much goodness for her, I hope you will pardon my offence too, madam.

Bel. There will be no great difficulty in that, since I am guilty of an equal fault.

Heart. Then pardons being passed on all sides, pray let's to church to conclude the day's work.

Const. But before you go, let me treat you, pray, with a song a new-married lady made within this week; it may be of use to you both.

SONG.

When yielding first to Damon's flame,
I sunk into his arms;
He swore he'd ever be the same,
Then rifled all my charms.
But fond of what he had long desired,
Too greedy of his prey,
My shepherd's flame, alas! expired
Before the verge of day.

My innocence in lovers' wars,
Reproach'd his quick defeat;
Confused, ashamed, and bathed in tears,
I mourn'd his cold retreat.
At length, Ah shepherdess! cried he,
Would you my fire renew,
Alas! you must retreat like me,
I'm lost if you pursue!

Heart. So, madam; now had the parson but done his business—

Bel. You'd be half weary of your bargain.

Heart. No, sure, I might dispense with one night's lodging.

Bel. I'm ready to try, sir.

Heart. Then let's to church:
And if it be our chance to disagree—

Bel. Take heed—the surly husband's fate you see. [*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE

(BY ANOTHER HAND)

SPOKEN BY LADY BRUTE AND BELINDA.

Lady Brute. No Epilogue!
Bel. I swear I know of none.
Lady Brute. Lord! How shall we excuse it to the town?
Bel. Why, we must e'en say something of our own.
Lady Brute. Our own! Ay, that must needs be precious stuff.
Bel. I'll lay my life, they'll like it well enough.
Come, faith, begin—
Lady Brute. Excuse me: after you.
Bel. Nay, pardon me for that, I know my cue.
Lady Brute. Oh, for the world, I would not have precedence.
Bel. O Lord!
Lady Brute. I swear—
Bel. O fy!
Lady Brute. I'm all obedience.
First, then, know all, before our doom is fix'd,
The third day is for us—
Bel. Nay, and the sixth.
Lady Brute. We speak not from the poet now, nor is it
His cause—(I want a rhyme)
Bel. That we solicit.
Lady Brute. Then sure you cannot have the hearts to be severe,
And damn us—
Bel. Damn us! Let 'em if they dare.
Lady Brute. Why, if they should, what punishment remains?
Bel. Eternal exile from behind our scenes.
Lady Brute. But if they're kind, that sentence we'll recal,
We can be grateful—
Bel. And have wherewithal.
Lady Brute. But at grand treaties hope not to be trusted,
Before preliminaries are adjusted.
Bel. You know the time, and we appoint this place!
Where, if you please, we'll meet and sign the peace.

Upon the revival of this Play, in 1725, *Sir John Vanbrugh thought proper to substitute the two following Scenes, in lieu of those printed in pages* 351, 353.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Covent-Garden.*

Enter Lord RAKE, Sir JOHN BRUTE, Colonel BULLY, *and others, with drawn swords.*

Rake. Is the dog dead?

Bully. No, damn him! I heard him wheeze.

Rake. How the witch his wife howled!

Bully. Ay, she'll alarm the watch presently.

Rake. Appear, knight, then. Come, you have a good cause to fight for, there's a man murdered.

Sir John. Is there? Then let his ghost be satisfied; for I'll sacrifice a constable to it presently, and burn his body upon his wooden chair.

Enter a Tailor, *with a bundle under his arm.*

Bully. How now! what have we got here? a thief?

Tailor. No, an't please you, I'm no thief.

Rake. That we'll see presently. Here—let the general examine him.

Sir John. Ay, ay, let me examine him, and I'll lay a hundred pound I find him guilty in spite of his teeth—for he looks—like a—sneaking rascal. Come, sirrah, without equivocation or mental reservation, tell me of what opinion you are, and what calling; for by them—I shall guess at your morals.

Tail. An't please you, I'm a dissenting journeyman woman's tailor.

Sir John. Then, sirrah, you love lying by your religion, and theft by your trade; and so that your punishment may be suitable to your crimes—I'll have you first gagged—and then hanged.

Tail. Pray, good worthy gentlemen, don't abuse me; indeed I'm an honest man, and a good workman, though I say it that should not say it.

Sir John. No words, sirrah, but attend your fate.

Rake. Let me see what's in that bundle.

Tail. An't please you, it's my lady's short cloak and sack.

Sir John. What lady, you reptile, you?

Tail. My lady Brute, an't please your honour.

Sir John. My lady Brute! my wife! the robe of my wife! with reverence let me approach it. The dear angel is always taking care of me in danger, and has sent me this suit of armour to protect me in this day of battle. On they go!

All. O brave knight!

Rake. Live Don Quixote the second.

Sir John. Sancho, my squire, help me on with my armour.

Tail. O dear gentlemen! I shall be quite undone if you take the sack.

Sir John. Retire, sirrah! and since you carry off your skin, go home and be happy.

Tail. [*Aside.*] I think I'd e'en as good follow the gentleman's advice; for if I dispute any longer, who knows but the whim may take 'em to case me.—These courtiers are fuller of tricks than they are of money; they'll sooner break a man's bones than pay his bills. [*Exit.*

Sir John. So! how do you like my shapes now?

Rake. To a miracle! he looks like a queen of the Amazons.—But to your arms! Gentlemen! The enemy's upon their march—here's the watch—

Sir John. 'Oons! if it were Alexander the Great, at the head of his army, I would drive him into a horse-pond.

All. Huzza! O brave knight!

Enter Watchmen.

Sir John. See! here he comes, with all his Greeks about him.—Follow me, boys.

Watchman. Heyday! who have we got here. Stand!

Sir John. Mayhap not.

Watch. What are you all doing here in the streets at this time o' night? And who are you, madam, that seem to be at the head of this noble crew?

Sir John. Sirrah, I am Bonduca, queen of the Welchmen, and with a leek as long as my pedigree, I will destroy your Roman legion in an instant.—Britons, strike home!

[*They fight off.* Watchmen *return with* Sir JOHN.

Watch. So, we have got the queen, however! We'll make her pay well for her ransom.—Come, madam, will your majesty please to walk before the constable?

Sir John. The constable's a rascal! and you are a son of a whore!

Watch. A most noble reply, truly! If this be her royal style, I'll warrant her maids of honour prattle prettily. But we'll teach you some of our court dialect before we part with you, princess.—Away with her to the Round-house.

Sir John. Hands off, you ruffians! My honour's dearer to me than my life; I hope you won't be uncivil.

Watch. Away with her! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Street before the* Justice's *House.*

Enter Constable *and* Watchmen, *with* Sir JOHN BRUTE.

Constable. Come, forsooth, come along, if you please. I once in compassion thought to have seen you safe home this morning, but you have been so rampant and abusive all night, I shall see what the justice of peace will say to you.

Sir John. And you shall see what I'll say to the justice of peace. [Watchman *knocks at the door.*

Enter Servant.

Con. Is Mr. Justice at home?

Serv. Yes.

Con. Pray acquaint his worship we have got an unruly woman here, and desire to know what he'll please to have done with her.

Serv. I'll acquaint my master. [*Exit*.

Sir John. Hark you, constable, what cuckoldly justice is this?

Con. One that knows how to deal with such romps as you are, I'll warrant you.

Enter Justice.

Just. Well, Mr. Constable, what is the matter there?

Con. An't please your worship, this here comical sort of a gentlewoman has committed great outrages to-night. She has been frolicking with my lord Rake and his gang; they attacked the watch, and I hear there has been a man killed: I believe 'tis they have done it.

Sir John. Sir, there may have been murder for aught I know; and 'tis a great mercy there has not been a rape too—that fellow would have ravished me.

2 *Watch*. Ravish! ravish! O lud! O lud! O lud! Ravish her! why, please your worship, I heard Mr. Constable say he believed she was little better than a maphrodrite.

Just. Why, truly, she does seem a little masculine about the mouth.

2 *Watch*. Yes, and about the hands too, an't please your worship. I did but offer in mere civility to help her up the steps into our apartment, and with her gripen fist—ay, just so, sir.

[Sir John *knocks him down*.

Sir John. I felled him to the ground like an ox.

Just. Out upon this boisterous woman! Out upon her!

Sir John. Mr. Justice, he would have been uncivil! It was in defence of my honour, and I demand satisfaction.

2 *Watch*. I hope your worship will satisfy her honour in Bridewell; that fist of hers will make an admirable hemp-beater.

Sir John. Sir, I hope you will protect me against that libidinous rascal; I am a woman of quality and virtue too, for all I am in an undress this morning.

Just. Why, she has really the air of a sort of a woman a little something out of the common.—Madam, if you expect I should be favourable to you, I desire I may know who you are.

Sir John. Sir, I am anybody, at your service.

Just. Lady, I desire to know your name.

Sir John. Sir, my name's Mary.

Just. Ay, but your surname, madam?

Sir John. Sir, my surname's the very same with my husband's.

Just. A strange woman this!—Who is your husband, pray?

Sir John. Sir John.

Just. Sir John who?

Sir John. Sir John Brute.

Just. Is it possible, madam, you can be my lady Brute?

Sir John. That happy woman, sir, am I; only a little in my merriment to-night.

Just. I am concerned for sir John.

Sir John. Truly so am I.

Just. I have heard he's an honest gentleman.

Sir John. As ever drank.

Just. Good lack! Indeed, lady, I'm sorry he has such a wife.

Sir John. I am sorry he has any wife at all.

Just. And so, perhaps, may he.—I doubt you have not given him a very good taste of matrimony.

Sir John. Taste, sir! Sir, I have scorned to stint him to a taste, I have given him a full meal of it.

Just. Indeed I believe so! But pray, fair lady, may he have given you any occasion for this extraordinary conduct?—does he not use you well?

Sir John. A little upon the rough sometimes.

Just. Ay, any man may be out of humour now and then.

Sir John. Sir, I love peace and quiet, and when a woman don't find that at home, she's apt sometimes to comfort herself with a few innocent diversions abroad.

Just. I doubt he uses you but too well. Pray how does he as to that weighty thing, money? Does he allow you what is proper of that?

Sir John. Sir, I have generally enough to pay the reckoning, if this son of a whore of a drawer would but bring his bill.

Just. A strange woman this!—Does he spend a reasonable portion of his time at home, to the comfort of his wife and children?

Sir John. He never gave his wife cause to repine at his being abroad in his life.

Just. Pray, madam, how may he be in the grand matrimonial point?—is he true to your bed?

Sir John. [*Aside*.] Chaste! oons! This fellow asks so many impertinent questions! egad I believe it is the justice's wife, in the justice's clothes.

Just. 'Tis a great pity he should have been thus disposed of.—Pray, madam, (and then I've done,) what may be your ladyship's common method of life? If I may presume so far.

Sir John. Why, sir, much that of a woman of quality.

Just. Pray how may you generally pass your time, madam? your morning for example.

Sir John. Sir, like a woman of quality.—I wake about two o'clock in the afternoon—I stretch—and make a sign for my chocolate.—When I have drank three cups—I slide down again upon my back, with my arms over my head, while my two maids put on my stockings.—Then, hanging upon their shoulders, I am trailed to my great chair, where I sit—and yawn—for my breakfast.—If it don't come presently, I lie down upon my couch to say my prayers, while my maid reads me the play-bills.

Just. Very well, madam.

Sir John. When the tea is brought in, I drink twelve regular dishes, with eight slices of bread and butter.—And half an hour after, I send to the cook to know if the dinner is almost ready.

Just. So, madam!

Sir John. By that time my head is half dressed, I hear my husband swearing himself into a state of perdition that the meat's all cold upon the table, to amend which, I come down in an hour more, and have it sent back to the kitchen, to be all dressed over again.

Just. Poor man!

Sir John. When I have dined, and my idle servants are presumptuously set down at their ease,

to do so too, I call for my coach, to go visit fifty dear friends, of whom I hope I shall never find one at home while I shall live.

Just. So, there's the morning and afternoon pretty well disposed of!—Pray, madam, how do you pass your evenings?

Sir John. Like a woman of spirit, sir, a great spirit. Give me a box and dice.—Seven's the main! Oons! Sir, I set you a hundred pound!—Why, do you think women are married now a days, to sit at home and mend napkins? Sir, we have nobler ways of passing time.

Just. Mercy upon us, Mr. Constable, what will this age come to?

Con. What will it come to, indeed, if such women as these are not set in the stocks?

Sir John. Sir, I have a little urgent business calls upon me; and therefore I desire the favour of you to bring matters to a conclusion.

Just. Madam, if I were sure that business were not to commit more disorders, I would release you.

Sir John. None—by my virtue.

Just. Then, Mr. Constable, you may discharge her.

Sir John. Sir, your very humble servant. If you please to accept of a bottle—

Just. I thank you kindly, madam; but I never drink in a morning. Good-by-t'ye, madam, good-by-t'ye.

Sir John. Good-by-t'ye, good sir.—[*Exit* Justice.] So!—Now, Mr. Constable, shall you and I go pick up a whore together?

Con. No, thank you, madam; my wife's enough to satisfy any reasonable man.

Sir John. [*Aside.*] He! he! he! he! he!—the fool is married then.—[*Aloud.*] Well, you won't go?

Con. Not I, truly.

Sir John. Then I'll go by myself; and you and your wife may be damned. [*Exit.*

Con. [*Gazing after him.*] Why God-a-mercy, lady! [*Exeunt.*

ÆSOP.

A Comedy.

PREFACE.

To speak for a play if it can't speak for itself is vain; and if it can, 'tis needless. For one of these reasons (I can't yet tell which, for 'tis now but the second day of acting) I resolve to say nothing for Æsop, though I know he'd be glad of help; for let the best happen that can, his journey's up hill, with a dead English weight at the tail of him.

At Paris indeed he scrambled up something faster (for 'twas up hill there too) than I'm afraid he will do here: the French having more mercury in their heads, and less beef and pudding in their bellies. Our solidity may set hard, what their folly makes easy: for fools I own they are, you know we have found them so in the conduct of the war; I wish we may do so in the management of the peace: but that's neither Æsop's business nor mine.

This play, gentlemen (or one not much unlike it), was writ in French about six years since by one Monsieur Boursault; 'twas played at Paris by the French comedians, and this was its fate:—The first day it appeared, 'twas routed;—people seldom being fond of what they don't understand, their own sweet persons excepted. The second (by the help of some bold knight-errants) it rallied; the third it advanced; the fourth it gave a vigorous attack; and the fifth put all the feathers in town to the scamper, pursuing 'em on to the fourteenth, and then they cried out quarter.

'Tis not reasonable to expect Æsop should gain so great a victory here, since 'tis possible by fooling with his sword I may have turned the edge on't. For I confess in the translation I have not at all stuck to the original. Nay, I have gone farther: I have wholly added the fifth Act, and crowded a country gentleman into the fourth, for which I ask Monsieur Boursault's pardon with all my heart, but doubt I never shall obtain it for bringing him into such company. Though after all, had I been so complaisant to have waited on his play word for word, 'tis possible even that might not have ensured the success of it: for though it swam in France, it might have sunk in England. Their country abounds in cork, ours in lead.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Æsop.
Learchus, *Governor of Cyzicus.*
Oronces, *in love with* Euphronia.

Euphronia, *Daughter to* Learchus, *in love with* Oronces.
Doris, *her Nurse.*

A Priest, Musicians, Dancers, Servants, &c.

People who come to Æsop, upon several occasions, independent one of another.

Hobson, Humphry, } *two Country Tradesmen.*
Roger, *a Country Bumpkin.*
Quaint, *a Herald,*
Fruitful, *an Innkeeper.*
Mrs. Fruitful, *his Wife.*
Sir Polidorus Hogstye, *a Country Gentleman.*
Hortensia, *an affected learned Lady.*
Aminta, *a lewd Mother.*
Mrs. Forgewill, *a Scrivener's Widow.*

SCENE,—Cyzicus.

PROLOGUE.

Gallants! we never yet produced a play
With greater fears than this we act to-day;
Barren of all the graces of the stage,
Barren of all that entertains this age.
No hero, no romance, no plot, no show,
No rape, no bawdy, no intrigue, no beau:
There's nothing in't with which we use to please ye;
With downright dull instruction we're to tease ye:
The stage turns pulpit, and the world's so fickle,
The playhouse in a whim turns conventicle.
But preaching here must prove a hungry trade,
The patentees will find so, I'm afraid:
For though with heavenly zeal you all abound,
As by your lives and morals may be found;
Though every female here o'erflows with grace,
And chaste Diana's written in her face;
Though maids renounce the sweets of fornication,
And one lewd wife's not left in all the nation;
Though men grow true, and the foul fiend defy;
Though tradesmen cheat no more, nor lawyers lie;
Though not one spot be found on Levi's tribe,
Nor one soft courtier that will touch a bribe;
Yet in the midst of such religious days,
Sermons have never borne the price of plays.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Learchus's *House.*

Enter Learchus, Euphronia, *and* Doris.

Lear. At length I am blessed with the sight of the world's wonder, the delight of mankind, the incomparable Æsop.—You had time to observe him last night, daughter, as he sat at supper with me. Tell me how you like him, child; is he not a charming person?

Euph. Charming!

Lear. What sayest thou to him, Doris? Thou art a good judge, a wench of a nice palate.

Dor. You would not have me flatter, sir?

Lear. No, speak thy thoughts boldly.

Dor. Boldly, you say?

Lear. Boldly, I say.

Dor. Why then, sir, my opinion of the gentleman is, that he's uglier than an old beau.

Lear. How! Impudence.

Dor. Nay, if you are angry, sir, second thoughts are best; he's as proper as a pikeman, holds up his head like a dancing-master, has the shape of a barb, the face of an angel, the voice of a cherubim, the smell of a civet-cat—

Lear. In short, thou art fool enough not to be pleased with him.

Dor. Excuse me for that, sir; I have wit enough to make myself merry with him.

Lear. If his body's deformed, his soul is beautiful: would to kind Heaven, as he is, my daughter could but find the means to please him!

Euph. To what end, dear father?

Lear. That he might be your husband, dear daughter.

Euph. My husband! Shield me, kind Heaven!

Dor. Psha! he has a mind to make us laugh, that's all.

Lear. Æsop, then, is not worth her care, in thy opinion?

Dor. Why truly, sir, I'm always for making suitable matches, and don't much approve of breeding monsters. I would have nothing marry a baboon but what has been got by a monkey.

Lear. How darest thou liken so incomparable a man to so contemptible a beast?

Dor. Ah, the inconstancy of this world! Out of sight, out of mind. Your little monkey is scarce cold in his grave, and you have already forgot what you used so much to admire. Do but call him to remembrance, sir, in his red coat, new gloves, little hat, and clean linen; then discharge your conscience, utter the truth from your heart, and tell us whether he was not the prettier gentleman of the two.—By my virginity, sir, (though that's but a slippery oath you'll say,) had they made love to me together, Æsop should have worn the willow.

Lear. Since nothing but an animal will please thee, 'tis pity my monkey had not that virginity thou hast sworn by. But I, whom wisdom charms, even in the homeliest dress, can never think the much deserving Æsop unworthy of my daughter.

Dor. Now, in the name of wonder, what is't you so admire in him?

Lear. Hark, and thou shalt know; but you, Euphronia, be you more especially attentive.
'Tis true, he's plain; but that, my girl's, a trifle.
All manly beauty's seated in the soul;
And that of Æsop, envy's self must own
Outshines whate'er the world has yet produced.
Crœsus, the prosperous favourite of Heaven;
Crœsus, the happiest potentate on earth;
Whose treasure (though immense) is the least part
Of what he holds from Providence's care,
Leans on his shoulder as his grand support;
Admires his wisdom, dotes upon his truth,
And makes him pilot to imperial sway.
But in this elevated post of power,
What's his employ? where does he point his thoughts?
To live in splendour, luxury, and ease,
Do endless mischiefs, by neglecting good,
And build his family on others' ruins?
No:
He serves the prince, and serves the people too;
Is useful to the rich, and helps the poor;
There's nothing stands neglected, but himself.
With constant pain, and yet with constant joy,
From place to place throughout the realm he goes,
With useful lessons, form'd to every rank:
The people learn obedience from his tongue,
The magistrate is guided in command,
The prince is minded of a father's care;
The subject's taught the duty of a child.
And as 'tis dangerous to be bold with truth,
He often calls for fable to his aid,
Where under abject names of beasts and birds,
Virtue shines out, and vice is clothed in shame:
And thus by inoffensive wisdom's force,
He conquers folly wheresoe'er he moves!
This is his portrait.

Dor. A very good picture of a very ill face!

Lear. Well, daughter; what, not a word? Is it possible anything that I am father of can be untouched with so much merit?

Euph. My duty may make all things possible. But Æsop is so ugly, sir.

Lear. His soul has so much beauty in't, your reason ought to blind your eyes. Besides, my interest is concerned; his power alarms me. I know throughout the kingdom he's the scourge of evil magistrates; turns out governors when they turn tyrants; breaks officers for false musters; excludes judges from giving sentence when they have been absent during the trial; hangs lawyers when they take fees on both sides; forbids physicians to take money of those they don't cure. 'Tis true, my innocence ought to banish my fears: but my government, child, is too delicious a morsel not to set many a frail mouth a-watering. Who knows what accusations envy may produce? But all would be secure, if thou couldst touch the heart of Æsop. Let me blow up thy ambition, girl; the fire of that will make thy eyes sparkle at him.—[Euphronia *sighs.*] What's that sigh for now? Ha!—A young husband, by my conscience! Ah, daughter, hadst thou a young husband, he'd make thee sigh indeed. I'll tell thee what he's composed of. He has a wig full of pulvilio, a pocket full of dice, a heart full of treason, a mouth full of lies, a belly full of drink, a carcass full of plasters, a tail

full of pox, and a head full of—nothing. There's his picture; wear it at thy heart if thou canst. But here comes one of greater worth.

Enter ÆSOP.

Lear. Good morning to my noble lord! your excellency—

Æsop. Softly, good governor:
I'm a poor wanderer from place to place;
Too weak to train the weight of grandeur with me.
The name of excellency's not for me.

Lear. My noble lord, 'tis due to your employ;
Your predecessors all—

Æsop. My predecessors all deserved it, sir,
They were great men in wisdom, birth, and service;
Whilst I, a poor, unknown, decrepit wretch,
Mounted aloft for Fortune's pastime,
Expect each moment to conclude the farce,
By sinking to the mud from whence I sprung.

Lear. Great Crœsus' gratitude will still support you;
His coffers all are open to your will,
Your future fortune's wholly in your power.

Æsop. But 'tis a power that I shall ne'er employ.

Lear. Why so, my lord?

Æsop. I'll tell you, sir.

A hungry goat, who had not eat
Some nights and days—(for want of meat)
Was kindly brought at last,
By Providence's care,
To better cheer,
After a more than penitential fast.
He found a barn well stored with grain,
To enter in required some pain;
But a delicious bait
Makes the way easy, though the pass is strait.
Our guest observing various meats,
He puts on a good modish face,
He takes his place,
He ne'er says grace,
But where he likes, he there falls to and eats.
At length with jaded teeth and jaws,
He made a pause,
And finding still some room,
Fell to as he had done before,
For time to come laid in his store;
And when his guts could hold no more,
He thought of going home.
But here he met the glutton's curse;
He found his belly grown so great,
'Twas vain to think of a retreat,
Till he had render'd all he'ad eat,
And well he fared no worse.

To the application, governor.

Lear. 'Tis easy to be made, my lord.

Æsop. I'm glad on't. Truth can never be too clear. [*Seeing* EUPHRONIA.
Is this young damsel your fair daughter, sir?

Lear. 'Tis my daughter, my good lord. Fair too, if she appears such in the eyes of the unerring Æsop.

Æsop. I never saw so beautiful a creature. [*Going up to salute her.*

Lear. [*Aside.*] Now's the time; kiss, soft girl, and fire him.

Æsop. How partial's nature 'twixt her form and mine! [*Gazing at her.*

Lear. [*Aside.*] Look, look, look, how he gazes at her!—Cupid's hard at work, I see that already. Slap; there he hits him!—If the wench would but do her part.—But see, see, how the perverse young baggage stands biting her thumbs, and won't give him one kind glance!—Ah the sullen jade! Had it been a handsome strong dog of five-and-twenty, she'd a fallen a coquetting on't, with every inch about her. But maybe it's I that spoil sport, I'll make a pretence to leave 'em together.—[*Aloud.*] Will your lordship please to drink any coffee this morning?

Æsop. With all my heart, governor.

Lear. Your lordship will give me leave to go and order it myself; for unless I am by, 'tis never perfect.

Æsop. Provided you leave me this fair maid in hostage for your return, I consent.

Lear. My good lord does my daughter too much honour.—[*Aside.*] Ah, that the wench would but do her part!—[*Aside to* EUPHRONIA.] Hark you, hussy! You can give yourself airs sometimes, you know you can. Do you remember what work you made with yourself at church t'other day? Play your tricks over again once more for my pleasure, and let me have a good account of this statesman, or, d'ye hear?—you shall die a maid; go chew upon that; go. [*Exit.*

Æsop. Here I am left, fair damsel, too much exposed to your charms, not to fall your victim.

Euph. Your fall will then be due to your own weakness, sir; for Heaven's my witness, I neither endeavour nor wish to wound you.

Æsop. I understand you, lady; your heart's already disposed of, 'tis seldom otherwise at your age.

Euph. My heart disposed of!

Dor. Nay, never mince the matter, madam. The gentleman looks like a civil gentleman, e'en confess the truth to him. He has a good interest with your father, and no doubt will employ it to break the heathenish match he proposes to you.—[*To* ÆSOP.] Yes, sir, my young lady has been in love these two years, and that with as pretty a fellow as ever entered a virgin's heart; tall, straight, young, vigorous, good clothes, long periwig, clean linen; in brief, he has everything that's necessary to set a young lady a-longing, and to stay it when he has done. But her father, whose ambition makes him turn fool in his old age, comes with a back stroke upon us, and spoils all our sport. Would you believe it, sir! he has proposed to her to-day the most confounded ugly fellow. Look, if the very thoughts of him don't set the poor thing a-crying? And you, sir, have so much power with the old gentleman, that one word from you would set us all right again. If he will have her a wife, in the name of Venus let him provide her a handsome husband, and not throw her into the paws of a thing that nature in a merry humour has made half man, half monkey.

Æsop. Pray what's this monster's name, lady?

Euph. No matter for his name, sir; my father will know who you mean at first word.

Æsop. But you should not always choose by the outside alone; believe me, fair damsel, a fine periwig keeps many a fool's head from the weather. Have a care of your young gallant.

Dor. There's no danger, I have examined him; his inside's as good as his out; I say he has wit, and I think I know.

Euph. Nay, she says true; he's even a miracle of wit and beauty: did you but see him, you'd be yourself my rival.

Æsop. Then you are resolved against the monster.

Dor. Fy, sir, fy! I wonder you'll put her in mind of that foul frightful thing. We shall have her dream of nothing all night but bats and owls, and toads and hedgehogs, and then we shall have such a squeaking and squalling with her, the whole house will be in an uproar: therefore, pray sir, name him no more, but use your interest with her father that she may never hear of him again.

Æsop. But if I should be so generous to save you from the old gallant, what shall I say for your young one?

Euph. Oh, sir, you may venture to enlarge upon his perfections; you need not fear saying too much in his praise.

Dor. And pray, sir, be as copious upon the defects of t'other; you need not fear outrunning the text there neither, say the worst you can.

Euph. You may say the first is the most graceful man that Asia ever brought forth.

Dor. And you may say the latter is the most deformed monster that copulation ever produced.

Euph. Tell him that Oronces (for that 's his dear name) has all the virtues that compose a perfect hero.

Dor. And tell him that Pigmy has all the vices that go to equip an attorney.

Euph. That to one I could be true to the last moment of my life.

Dor. That for t'other she'd cuckold him the very day of her marriage.—This, sir, in few words, is the theme you are desired to preach upon.

Æsop. I never yet had one that furnished me more matter.

Enter Servant.

Ser. My lord, there's a lady below desires to speak with your honour.

Æsop. What lady?

Ser. It's my lady—my lady—[*To* Doris.] The lady there, the wise lady, the great scholar, that nobody can understand.

Dor. O ho, is it she? pray let's withdraw, and oblige her, madam; she's ready to swoon at the insipid sight of one of her own sex.

Euph. You'll excuse us, sir, we leave you to wiser company. [*Exeunt* Euphronia *and* Doris.

Enter Hortensia.

Hort. The Déesse who from Atropos's breast preserves
The names of heroes and their actions,
Proclaims your fame throughout this mighty orb,
And—

Æsop. [*Aside.*] Shield me, my stars! what have you sent me here?—[*Aloud.*] For pity's sake, good lady, be more humane: my capacity is too heavy to mount to your style: if you would have me know what you mean, please to come down to my understanding.

Hort. I've something in my nature soars too high
For vulgar flight, I own;
But Æsop's sphere must needs be within call;
Æsop and I may sure converse together.
I know he's modest, but I likewise know
His intellects are categorical.

Æsop. Now, by my faith, lady, I don't know what *intellect* is; and methinks *categorical* sounds as if you called me names. Pray speak that you may be understood; language was designed for it, indeed it was.

Hort. Of vulgar things, in vulgar phrase we talk;
But when of Æsop we must speak,
The theme's too lofty for an humble style:
Æsop is sure no common character.

Æsop. No, truly, I am something particular. Yet, if I am not mistaken, what I have extraordinary about me, may be described in very homely language. Here was a young gentlewoman but just now pencilled me out to a hair, I thought; and yet, I vow to Gad, the learned'st word I heard her make use of, was monster.

Hort. That was a woman, sir, a very woman;
Her cogitations all were on the outward man:
But I strike deeper, 'tis the mind I view.
The soul's the worthy object of my care;
The soul, that sample of divinity,
That glorious ray of heavenly light. The soul,
That awful throne of thought, that sacred seat
Of contemplation. The soul, that noble source
Of wisdom, that fountain of comfort, that spring of joy,
That happy token of eternal life:
The soul, that——

Æsop. Pray, lady, are you married?

Hort. Why that question, sir?

Æsop. Only that I might wait upon your husband to wish him joy.

Hort. When people of my composition would marry, they first find something of their own species to join with; I never could resolve to take a thing of common fabric to my bed, lest when his brutish inclinations prompt him, he should make me mother to a form like his own.

Æsop. Methinks a lady so extremely nice, should be much at a loss who to converse with.

Hort. Sir I keep my chamber, and converse with myself; 'tis better being alone, than to misally one's conversation. Men are scandalous, and women are insipid: discourse without figure makes me sick at my soul: Oh the charms of a metaphor! What harmony there is in words of erudition! The music of them is inimaginable.

Æsop. Will you hear a fable, lady?

Hort. Willingly, sir; the apologue pleases me when the application of it is just.

Æsop. It is, I'll answer for it.

Once on a time, a nightingale
To changes prone;
Unconstant, fickle, whimsical,
(A female one)
Who sung like others of her kind,
Hearing a well-taught linnet's airs,
Had other matters in her mind,
To imitate him she prepares.
Her fancy straight was on the wing:
"I fly," quoth she,
"As well as he;
I don't know why
I should not try
As well as he to sing."
From that day forth she changed her note,
She spoil'd her voice, she strain'd her throat:
She did, as learned women do,
Till every thing
That heard her sing,
Would run away from her—as I from you.

[*Exit, running.*

Hort. How grossly does this poor world suffer itself to be imposed upon!—Æsop, a man of sense! —Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! Alas, poor wretch! I should not have known him but by his deformity, his soul's as nauseous to my understanding, as his odious body to my sense of feeling. Well,

'Mongst all the wits that are allow'd to shine,
Methinks there's nothing yet approaches mine:
Sure I was sent the homely age to adorn;
What star, I know not, ruled when I was born,
But everything besides myself's my scorn.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* LEARCHUS'S *House.*

Enter EUPHRONIA *and* DORIS.

Dor. What in the name of Jove's the matter with you? Speak, for Heaven's sake!

Euph. Oh! what shall I do? Doris, I'm undone.

Dor. What, ravished?

Euph. No, ten times worse! ten times worse! Unlace me, or I shall swoon.

Dor. Unlace you! why you are not thereabouts, I hope?

Euph. No, no; worse still; worse than all that.

Dor. Nay, then it's bad indeed.—[DORIS *unlaces her.*] There, how d'ye do now?

Euph. So; it's going over.

Dor. Courage, pluck up your spirits! Well, now what's the matter!

Euph. The matter! thou sha't hear. Know that—that cheat—Æsop—

Dor. Like enough; speak! What has he done? that ugly ill-boding Cyclops.

Euph. Why, instead of keeping his promise, and speaking for Oronces, he has not said one word but what has been for himself. And by my father's order, before to-morrow noon he's to marry me.

Dor. He marry you!

Euph. Am I in the wrong to be in this despair? Tell me, Doris, if I am to blame?

Dor. To blame! no, by my troth. That ugly, old, treacherous piece of vermin! that melancholy mixture of impotence and desire! does his mouth stand to a young partridge! ah, the old goat! And your father!—he downright dotes at last then.

Euph. Ah, Doris; what a husband does he give me! and what a lover does he rob me of! Thou knowest 'em both; think of Oronces, and think of Æsop.

Dor. [*Spitting.*] A foul monster! And yet, now I think on't, I'm almost as angry at t'other too. Methinks he makes but a slow voyage on't for a man in love: 'tis now above two months since he went to Lesbos, to pack up the old bones of his dead father; sure he might have made a little more haste.

Enter ORONCES.

Euph. Oh! my heart; what do I see?

Dor. Talk of the devil, and he's at your elbow.

Oron. My dear soul!

[EUPHRONIA *runs and leaps about his neck.*

Euph. Why would you stay so long from me?

Oron. 'Twas not my fault indeed; the winds—

Dor. The winds! Will the winds blow you your mistress again? We have had winds too, and waves into the bargain, storms and tempests, sea monsters, and the devil and all. She struggled as long as she could, but a woman can do no more than she can do; when her breath was gone, down she sunk.

Oron. What's the meaning of all this?

Dor. Meaning! There's meaning and mumping too: your mistress is married, that's all.

Oron. Death and furies!

Euph. [*Clinging about him.*] Don't you frighten him too much, neither, Doris.—No, my dear, I'm not yet executed, though I'm condemned.

Oron. Condemned! to what? Speak! quick!

Dor. To be married.

Oron. Married! When? how? where? to what? to whom?

Dor. Æsop! Æsop! Æsop! Æsop! Æsop!

Oron. Fiends and spectres! What! that piece of deformity! that monster! that crump!

Dor. The same, sir, the same.—I find he knows him.—You might have come home sooner.

Oron. Dear Euphronia, ease me from my pain.
Swear that you neither have nor will consent.
I know this comes from your ambitious father;
But you're too generous, too true to leave me:
Millions of kingdoms ne'er would shake my faith,
And I believe your constancy as firm.

Euph. You do me justice, you shall find you do:
For racks and tortures, crowns and sceptres join'd,
Shall neither fright me from my truth, nor tempt
Me to be false. On this you may depend.

Dor. Would to the Lord you would find some other place to make your fine speeches in! Don't you know that our dear friend Æsop's coming to receive his visits here? In this great downy chair your pretty little husband-elect is to sit and hear all the complaints of the town: one of wisdom's chief recompenses being to be constantly troubled with the business of fools.—Pray, madam, will you take the gentleman by the hand, and lead him into your chamber; and when you are there, don't lie whining, and crying, and sighing, and wishing—[*Aside.*] If he had not been more modest than wise, he might have set such a mark upon the goods before now, that ne'er a merchant of 'em all would have bought 'em out of his hands. But young fellows are always in the wrong: either so impudent they are nauseous, or so modest they are useless.—[*Aloud.*] Go, pray get you gone together.

Euph. But if my father catch us, we are ruined.

Dor. By my conscience, this love will make us all turn fools! Before your father can open the door, can't he slip down the back-stairs? I'm sure he may, if you don't hold him; but that's the old trade. Ah—well, get you gone, however.—Hark! I hear the old baboon cough; away!—[*Exeunt* ORONCES *and* EUPHRONIA *running.*] Here he comes, with his ugly beak before him! Ah—a luscious bedfellow, by my troth!

Enter LEARCHUS *and* ÆSOP.

Lear. Well, Doris, what news from my daughter? Is she prudent?

Dor. Yes, very prudent.

Lear. What says she? what does she do?

Dor. Do? what should she do? Tears her cornet; bites her thumbs; throws her fan in the fire; thinks it's dark night at noon-day; dreams of monsters and hobgoblins; raves in her sleep of forced marriage and cuckoldom; cries Avaunt Deformity! then wakens of a sudden, with fifty arguments at her fingers' ends, to prove the lawfulness of rebellion in a child, when a parent turns tyrant.

Lear. Very fine! but all this shan't serve her turn.—I have said the word, and will be obeyed.—My lord does her honour.

Dor. [*Aside.*] Yes, and that's all he can do to her.—[*To* LEARCHUS.] But I can't blame the gentleman, after all; he loves my mistress because she's handsome, and she hates him because he's ugly. I never saw two people more in the right in my life.—[*To* ÆSOP.] You'll pardon me, sir, I'm somewhat free.

Æsop. Why, a ceremony would but take up time.—But, governor, methinks I have an admirable advocate about your daughter.

Lear. Out of the room, Impudence! begone, I say!

Dor. So I will; but you'll be as much in the wrong when I am gone as when I am here: and your conscience, I hope, will talk as pertly to you as I can do.

Æsop. If she treats me thus before my face, I may conclude I'm finely handled behind my back.

Dor. I say the truth here, and I can say no worse anywhere. [*Exit.*

Lear. I hope your lordship won't be concerned at what this prattling wench bleats out; my daughter will be governed, she's bred up to obedience. There may be some small difficulty in weaning her from her young lover; but 'twon't be the first time she has been weaned from a breast, my lord.

Æsop. Does she love him fondly, sir?

Lear. Foolishly, my lord.

Æsop. And he her?

Lear. The same.

Æsop. Is he young?

Lear. Yes, and vigorous.

Æsop. Rich?

Lear. So, so.

Æsop. Well-born?

Lear. He has good blood in his veins.

Æsop. Has he wit?

Lear. He had, before he was in love.

Æsop. And handsome with all this?

Lear. Or else we should not have half so much trouble with him.

Æsop. Why do you then make her quit him for me? All the world knows I am neither young, noble, nor rich; and as for my beauty—look you, governor, I'm honest. But when children cry, they tell 'em Æsop's a-coming. Pray, sir, what is it makes you so earnest to force your daughter?

Lear. Am I then to count for nothing the favour you are in at court? Father-in-law to the great Æsop! What may I not aspire to? My foolish daughter, perhaps, mayn't be so well pleased with't, but we wise parents usually weigh our children's happiness in the scale of our own inclinations.

Æsop. Well, governor, let it be your care, then, to make her consent.

Lear. This moment, my lord, I reduce her either to obedience, or to dust and ashes. [*Exit.*

Æsop. Adieu!—[*Calls to a* Servant.] Now let in the people who come for audience.

[*Seats himself in his chair, reading papers.*

Enter HOBSON *and* HUMPHRY.

Hob. There he is, neighbour, do but look at him.

Hum. Ay, one may know him, he's well marked. But, dost hear me? what title must we give him? for if we fail in that point, d'ye see me, we shall never get our business done. Courtiers love titles almost as well as they do money, and that's a bold word now.

Hob. Why, I think we had best call him his Grandeur.

Hum. That will do; thou hast hit on't. Hold still, let me speak.—May it please your grandeur—

Æsop. There I interrupt you, friend; I have a weak body that will ne'er be able to bear that title.

Hum. D'ye hear that, neighbour? what shall we call him now?

Hob. Why, call him,—call him—his Excellency; try what that will do.

Hum. May it please your excellency—

Æsop. Excellency's a long word; it takes up too much time in business. Tell me what you'd have in few words.

Hum. Neighbour, this man will never give ten thousand pounds to be made a lord. But what shall I say to him now? He puts me quite out of my play.

Hob. Why e'en talk to him as we do to one another.

Hum. Shall I? why so I will then.—Hem! Neighbour; we want a new governor, neighbour.

Æsop. A new governor, friend!

Hum. Ay, friend.

Æsop. Why, what's the matter with your old one?

Hum. What's the matter? Why he grows rich; that's the matter: and he that's rich, can't be innocent; that's all.

Æsop. Does he use any of you harshly? or punish you without a fault?

Hum. No, but he grows as rich as a miser, his purse is so crammed, it's ready to burst again.

Æsop. When 'tis full 'twill hold no more. A new governor will have an empty one.

Hum. 'Fore Gad, neighbour, the little gentleman's in the right on't!

Hob. Why truly I don't know but he may. For now it comes in my head. It cost me more money to fat my hog, than to keep him fat when he was so. Prithee, tell him we'll e'en keep our old governor.

Hum. I'll do't.—Why, look you, sir, d'ye see me? having seriously considered of the matter, my neighbour Hobson, and I here, we are content to jog on a little longer with him we have: but if you'd do us another courtesy, you might.

Æsop. What's that, friend?

Hum. Why that's this: our king Crœsus is a very good prince, as a man may say:—but—a—but—taxes are high, an't please you; and—a—poor men want money, d'ye see me. It's very hard, as we think, that the poor should work to maintain the rich. If there were no taxes, we should do pretty well.

Hob. Taxes indeed are very burdensome.

Æsop. I'll tell you a story, countrymen.

Once on a time, the hands and feet,
As mutineers, grew mighty great;
They met, caball'd, and talk'd of treason,
They swore by Jove they knew no reason
The belly should have all the meat;
It was a damn'd notorious cheat,
They did the work, and—death and hell, they'd
eat!

The belly, who adored good cheer,
Had like to have died away for fear:
Quoth he, "Good folks, you little know
What 'tis you are about to do;
If I am starved, what will become of you?"

"We neither know nor care," cried they;
"But this we will be bold to say,
We'll see you damn'd
Before we'll work,
And you receive the pay."

With that the hands to pocket went,
Full wristband deep,
The legs and feet fell fast asleep:
Their liberty they had redeem'd,
And all except the belly seem'd
Extremely well content.

But mark what follow'd; 'twas not long
Before the right became the wrong,
The mutineers were grown so weak,
They found 'twas more than time to squeak:
They call for work, but 'twas too late.
The stomach (like an aged maid,
Shrunk up for want of human aid,)
The common debt of nature paid,
And with its destiny entrain'd their fate.

What think you of this story, friends, ha? Come, you look like wise men; I'm sure you understand what's for your good. In giving part of what you have, you secure all the rest. If the king had no money, there could be no army; and if there were no army, your enemies would be amongst you. One day's pillage would be worse than twenty years' taxes. What say you? is it not so?

Hum. By my troth, I think he's in the right on't again! Who'd think that little humpback of his should have so much brains in't, neighbour?

Æsop. Well, honest men, is there anything else that I can serve you in?

Hob. D'ye hear that, Humphry?—Why that was civil now. But courtiers seldom want good-breeding; let's give the devil his due.—Why, to tell you the truth, honest gentleman, we had a whole budget full of grievances to complain of. But I think—a—ha, neighbour?—we had e'en as good let 'em alone.

Hum. Why good feath I think so too, for by all I can see, we are like to make no great hond on't. Besides, between thee and me, I begin to daubt, whether aur grievances do us such a plaguy deal of mischief as we fancy.

Hob. Or put case they did, Humphry; I'se afraid he that goes to a courtier, in hope to get fairly rid of 'em, may be said (in aur country dialect) to take the wrong sow by the ear.—But here's neighbour Roger, he's a wit, let's leave him to him. [*Exeunt* HOBSON *and* HUMPHRY.

Enter ROGER; *he looks seriously upon* ÆSOP, *and then bursts out a-laughing.*

Rog. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! Did ever mon behold the like? ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Æsop. Hast thou any business with me, friend?

Rog. Yes, by my troth, have I; but if Roger were to be hanged up for't, look you now, he could not hold laughing. What I have in my mind, out it comes: but bar that; I'se an honest lad as well as another.

Æsop. My time's dearer to me than yours, friend. Have you anything to say to me?

Rog. Gadswookers, do people use to ask for folks when they have nothing to say to 'em? I'se tell you my business.

Æsop. Let's hear it.

Rog. I have, as you see, a little wit.

Æsop. True.

Rog. I live in a village hard by, and I'se the best man in it, though I say it that should not say it. I have good drink in my cellar, and good corn in my barn; I have cows and oxen, hogs and sheep, cocks and hens, and geese and turkeys: but the truth will out, and so out let it. I'se e'en tired of being called plain Roger. I has a leathern purse, and in that purse there's many a fair half-crown, with the king's sweet face upon it, God bless him; and with this money I have a mind to bind myself prentice to a courtier. It's a good trade, as I have heard say; there's money stirring: let a lad be but diligent, and do what he's bid, he shall be let into the secret, and share part of the profits. I have not lived to these years for nothing: those that will swim must go into deep water. I'se get our wife Joan to be the queen's chambermaid; and then—crack says me I! and forget all my acquaintance. But to come to the business. You who are the king's great favourite, I desire you'll be pleased to sell me some of your friendship, that I may get a court-place. Come, you shall choose me one yourself; you look like a shrewd man; by the mass you do!

Æsop. I choose thee a place!

Rog. Yes: I would willingly have it such a sort of a place as would cost little, and bring in a great deal; in a word, much profit, and nothing to do.

Æsop. But you must name what post you think would suit your humour.

Rog. Why I'se pratty indifferent as to that: secretary of state, or butler; twenty shillings more, twenty shillings less, is not the thing I stand upon. I'se no hagler, gadswookers; and he that says I am—'zbud he lies! There's my humour now.

Æsop. But hark you, friend, you say you are well as you are; why then do you desire to change?

Rog. Why what a question now is there for a man of your parts? I'm well, d'ye see me; and what of all that? I desire to be better. There's an answer for you.—[*Aside.*] Let Roger alone with him.

Æsop. Very well: this is reasoning; and I love a man should reason with me. But let us inquire a little whether your reasons are good or not. You say at home you want for nothing.

Rog. Nothing, 'fore George.

Æsop. You have good drink?

Rog. 'Zbud the best i'th' parish! [*Sings.*

And dawne it merrily goes, my lad,
And dawne it merrily goes!

Æsop. You eat heartily?

Rog. I have a noble stomach.

Æsop. You sleep well?

Rog. Just as I drink, till I can sleep no longer.

Æsop. You have some honest neighbours?

Rog. Honest! 'Zbud we are all so, the tawne raund, we live like breether; when one can sarve another, he does it with all his heart and guts; when we have anything that's good, we eat it together, holidays and Sundays we play at nine-pins, tumble upon the grass with wholesome young maids, laugh till we split, daunce till we are weary, eat till we burst, drink till we are sleepy, then swap into bed, and snore till we rise to breakfast.

Æsop. And all this thou wouldst leave to go to court! I'll tell thee what once happened.
A mouse, who long had lived at court,
(Yet ne'er the better christian for't)
Walking one day to see some country sport,
He met a homebred village-mouse.
Who with an awkward speech and bow,
That favoured much of cart and plough,
Made a shift, I know not how,
To invite him to his house.
Quoth he, "My lord, I doubt you'll find
Our country fare of homely kind;
But by my troth, you're welcome to't,
Y'ave that, and bread, and cheese to boot:"
And so they sat and dined.

Rog. Very well.

Æsop. The courtier could have eat at least
As much as any household priest,
But thought himself obliged in feeding
To show the difference of town-breeding;
He pick'd and cull'd, and turn'd the meat,
He champ'd and chew'd and could not eat:
No toothless woman at fourscore,
Was ever seen to mumble more.
He made a thousand ugly faces,
Which (as sometimes in ladies' cases)
Were all design'd for airs and graces.

Rog. Ha! ha!

Æsop. At last he from the table rose,
He pick'd his teeth, and blow'd his nose,
And with an easy negligence,
As though he lately came from France.
He made a careless sliding bow:
"'Fore Gad," quoth he, "I don't know how
I shall return your friendly treat;
But if you'll take a bit of meat
In town with me,
You there shall see
How we poor courtiers eat."

Rog. Tit for tat; that was friendly.

Æsop. There needed no more invitation
To e'er a country squire i'th' nation:
Exactly to the time he came,
Punctual as woman when she meets
A man between a pair of sheets,
As good a stomach, and as little shame.

Rog. Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho!

Æsop. To say the truth he found good cheer,
With wine, instead of ale and beer:
But just as they sat down to eat,
Comes bouncing in a hungry cat.

Rog. O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!

Æsop. The nimble courtier skipp'd from table,
The squire leap'd too, as he was able:
It can't be said that they were beat,
It was no more than a retreat;
Which, when an army, not to fight
By day-light, runs away by night,
Was ever judged a great and glorious feat.

Rog. Ever! ever! ever!

Æsop. The cat retired, our guests return,
The danger past becomes their scorn,
They fall to eating as before;—
The butler rumbles at the door.

Rog. Good Lord!

Æsop. To boot and saddle again they sound.

Rog. Ta ra! tan tan ta ra! ra ra tan ta ra!

Æsop. They frown, as they would stand their ground,
But (like some of our friends) they found
'Twas safer much to scour.

Rog. Tantive! Tantive! Tantive! &c.

Æsop. At length the squire, who hated arms,
Was so perplex'd with these alarms,
He rose up in a kind of heat:
"Udzwooks!" quoth he, with all your meat,
I will maintain a dish of pease,
A radish, and a slice of cheese,
With a good dessert of ease,
Is much a better treat.
However,
Since every man should have his due,
I own, sir, I'm obliged to you
For your intentions at your board;
But pox upon your courtly crew!"

Rog. Amen! I pray the Lord. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! Now the de'el cuckold me if this story be not worth a sermon.—Give me your hond, sir.—If it had na' been for your friendly advice, I was going to be fool enough to be secretary of state.

Æsop. Well, go thy ways home, and be wiser for the future.

Rog. And so I will: for that same mause, your friend, was a witty person, gadsbudlikins! and so our wife Joan shall know: for between you and I, 'tis she has put me upon going to court. Sir, she has been so praud, so saucy, so rampant, ever since I brought her home a laced pinner, and a pink-colour pair of shoe-strings, from Tickledawne Fair, the parson o'th' parish can't rule her; and that you'll say's much. But so much for that. Naw I thank you for your good caunsel, honest little gentleman; and to show you that I'se not ungrateful—give me your hand once more.—If you'll take the pains but to walk dawne to our towne—a word in your ear—I'se send you so drunk whome again, you shall remember friendly Roger as long as you have breath in your body. [*Exit.*

Æsop. Farewell! what I both envy and despise:
Thy happiness and ignorance provoke me.
How noble were the thing call'd knowledge,
Did it but lead us to a bliss like thine!
But there's a secret curse in wisdom's train,
Which on its pleasures stamps perpetual pain,
And makes the wise man loser by his gain.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* LEARCHUS'S *House.*

Enter ÆSOP.

Æsop. Who waits there?

Enter Servant.

If there be anybody that has business with me, let 'em in.

Serv. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Enter QUAINT, *who stands at a distance, making a great many fawning bows.*

Æsop. Well, friend, who are you?

Quaint. My name's Quaint, sir, the profoundest of all your honour's humble servants.

Æsop. And what may your business be with me, sir?

Quaint. My business, sir, with every man, is first of all to do him service.

Æsop. And your next is, I suppose, to be paid for't twice as much as 'tis worth.

Quaint. Your honour's most obedient, humble servant.

Æsop. Well, sir, but upon what account am I going to be obliged to you?

Quaint. Sir, I'm a genealogist.

Æsop. A genealogist!

Quaint. At your service, sir.

Æsop. So, sir.

Quaint. Sir, I am informed from common fame, as well as from some little private familiar intelligence, that your wisdom is entering into treaty with the *primum mobile* of good and evil, a fine lady. I have travelled, sir; I have read, sir; I have considered, sir; and I find, sir, that the nature of a fine lady is to be—a fine lady, sir; a fine lady's a fine lady, sir, all the world over; she loves a fine house, fine furniture, fine coaches, fine liveries, fine petticoats, fine smocks; and if she stops there—she's a fine lady indeed, sir. But to come to my point. It being the Lydian custom, that the fair bride should be presented on her wedding-day with something that may signify the merit and the worth of her dread lord and master, I thought the noble Æsop's pedigree might be the welcomest gift that he could offer. If his honour be of the same opinion—I'll speak a bold word; there's ne'er a herald in all Asia shall put better blood in his veins, than—sir, your humble servant, Jacob Quaint.

Æsop. Dost thou then know my father, friend? for I protest to thee I am a stranger to him.

Quaint. Your father, sir, ha! ha! I know every man's father, sir, and every man's grandfather, and every man's great-grandfather. Why, sir, I'm a herald by nature; my mother was a Welchwoman.

Æsop. A Welchwoman! Prithee of what country's that?

Quaint. That, sir, is a country in the world's backside, where every man is born a gentleman, and a genealogist. Sir, I could tell my mother's pedigree before I could speak plain; which, to show you the depth of my art, and the strength of my memory, I'll trundle you down in an instant. —Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet; Shem—

Æsop. Hold, I conjure thee, in the name of all thy ancestors!

Quaint. Sir, I could take it higher, but I begin at Noah for brevity's sake.

Æsop. No more on't, I entreat thee.

Quaint. Your honour's impatient, perhaps, to hear your own descent. A word to the wise is enough. Hem, hem: Solomon, the wise king of Judea—

Æsop. Hold once more!

Quaint. Ha! ha! your honour's modest, but—Solomon, the wise king of Judea—

Æsop. Was my ancestor, was he not?

Quaint. He was, my lord, which no one sure can doubt, who observes how much of prince there hangs about you.

Æsop. What! is't in my mien?

Quaint. You have something—wondrous noble in your air.

Æsop. Personable too; view me well.

Quaint. N—not tall; but majestic.

Æsop. My shape.

Quaint. A world of symmetry in it.

Æsop. The lump upon my back.

Quaint. N—not regular; but agreeable.

Æsop. Now by my honesty thou art a villain, herald. But flattery's a thrust I never fail to parry. 'Tis a pass thou shouldst reserve for young fencers; with feints like those they're to be hit: I do not doubt but thou hast found it so; hast not?

Quaint. I must confess, sir, I have sometimes made 'em bleed by't. But I hope your honour will please to excuse me, since, to speak the truth, I get my bread by't, and maintain my wife and children: and industry, you know, sir, is a commendable thing. Besides, sir, I have debated the business a little with my conscience; for I'm like the rest of my neighbours, I'd willingly get money, and be saved too, if the thing may be done upon any reasonable terms: and so, sir, I say, to quiet my conscience, I have found out at last that flattery is a duty.

Æsop. A duty!

Quaint. Ay, sir, a duty: for the duty of all men is to make one another pass their time as pleasantly as they can. Now, sir, here's a young lord, who has a great deal of land, a great deal of title, a great deal of meat, a greal deal of noise, a great many servants, and a great many diseases. I find him very dull, very restless, tired with ease, cloyed with plenty, a burden to himself, and a plague to his family. I begin to flatter: he springs off of the couch; turns himself round in the glass; finds all I say true; cuts a caper a yard high; his blood trickles round in his veins; his heart's as light as his heels; and before I leave him—his purse is as empty as his head. So we both are content; for we part much happier than we met.

Æsop. Admirable rogue! what dost thou think
of murder
And of rape? Are not they duties too?
Wer't not for such vile fawning things as thou art,

Young nobles would not long be what they are:
They'd grow ashamed of luxury and ease,
And rouse up the old spirit of their fathers;
Leave the pursuit of a poor frighten'd hare,
And make their foes to tremble in her stead;
Furnish their heads with sciences and arts,
And fill their hearts with honour, truth, and friendship;
Be generous to some, and just to all;
Drive home their creditors with bags of gold,
Instead of chasing 'em with swords and staves;
Be faithful to their king and country both,
And stab the offerer of a bribe from either;
Blush even at a wandering thought of vice,
And boldly own they durst be friends to virtue;
Tremble at nothing but the frowns of Heaven,
And be no more ashamed of him that made 'em.

Quaint. [*Aside.*] If I stand to hear this crump preach a little longer, I shall be fool enough perhaps to be bubbled out of my livelihood, and so lose a bird in the hand for two in the bush.—[*Aloud.*] Sir, since I have not been able to bring you to a good opinion of yourself, 'tis very probable I shall scarce prevail with you to have one of me. But if you please to do me the favour to forget me, I shall ever acknowledge myself—sir, your most obedient, faithful, humble servant. [*Going.*

Æsop. Hold; if I let thee go, and give thee nothing, thou'lt be apt to grumble at me; and therefore—Who waits there?

Enter Servant.

Quaint. [*Aside.*] I don't like his looks, by Gad!

Æsop. I'll present thee with a token of my love.

Quaint. A—another time, sir, will do as well.

Æsop. No; I love to be out of debt, though 'tis being out of the fashion.—[*To* Servant.] So, d'ye year? give this honest gentleman half a score good strokes on the back with a cudgel.

Quaint. By no means in the world, sir.

Æsop. Indeed, sir, you shall take 'em.

Quaint. Sir, I don't merit half your bounty.

Æsop. O 'tis but a trifle!

Quaint. Your generosity makes me blush. [*Looking about to make his escape.*

Æsop. That's your modesty, sir.

Quaint. Sir, you are pleased to compliment. But a—twenty pedigrees for a clear coast! [*Running off, the* Servant *after him.*

Æsop. Wait upon him down stairs, fellow.—I'd do't myself, were I but nimble enough; but he makes haste to avoid ceremony.

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's a lady in great haste desires to speak with you.

Æsop. Let her come in. [*Exit* Servant.

Enter Aminta, *weeping.*

Amin. O sir, if you don't help me, I'm undone!

Æsop. What, what's the matter, lady?

Amin. My daughter, sir, my daughter's run away with a filthy fellow.

Æsop. A slippery trick indeed!

Amin. For Heaven's sake, sir, send immediately to pursue 'em, and seize 'em. But 'tis in vain, 'twill be too late, 'twill be too late! I'll warrant this very moment they are got together in a room with a couch in't. All's gone, all's gone! though 'twere made of gold 'tis lost. Oh, my honour! my honour! A forward girl she was always; I saw it in her eyes the very day of her birth.

Æsop. That indeed was early; but how do you know she's gone with a fellow?

Amin. I have e'en her own insolent handwriting for't, sir; take but the pains to read what a letter she has left me.

Æsop. [*Reads.*] *I love, and am beloved, and that's the reason I run away.*—Short, but significant!—*I'm sure there's nobody knows better than your ladyship what allowances are to be made to flesh and blood; I therefore hope this from your justice, that what you have done three times yourself, you'll pardon once in your daughter.*—The dickens!

Amin. Now, sir, what do you think of the business?

Æsop. Why truly, lady, I think it one of the most natural businesses I have met with a great while. I'll tell you a story.

A crab-fish once her daughter told,
(In terms that savour'd much of scold)
She could not bear to see her go,
Sidle, sidle, to and fro;
"The devil's in the wench!" quoth she,
"When so much money has been paid,
To polish you like me;
It makes me almost mad to see
Y'are still so awkward, an ungainly jade."
Her daughter smiled, and look'd askew,
She answer'd (for to give her her due)
Pertly, as most folks' daughters do:
"Madam, your ladyship," quoth she,
"Is pleased to blame in me
What, on inquiry, you may find,
Admits a passable excuse,
From a proverb much in use,
That 'cat will after kind.'"

Amin. Sir, I took you to be a man better bred, than to liken a lady to a crab-fish.

Æsop. What I want in good-breeding, lady, I have in truth and honesty: as what you have wanted in virtue, you have had in a good face.

Amin. Have had, sir! what I have had, I have still; and shall have a great while, I hope. I'm no grandmother, sir.

Æsop. But in a fair way for't, madam.

Amin. Thanks to my daughter's forwardness then, not my years. I'd have you to know, sir, I have never a wrinkle in my face. A young pert slut! who'd think she should know so much at her age?

Æsop. Good masters make quick scholars, lady; she has learned her exercise from you.

Amin. But where's the remedy, sir?

Æsop. In trying if a good example will reclaim her, as an ill one has debauched her. Live private, and avoid scandal.

Amin. Never speak it; I can no more retire, than I can go to church twice of a Sunday.

Æsop. What! your youthful blood boils in your veins, I'll warrant.

Amin. I have warmth enough to endure the air, old gentleman. I need not shut myself up in a house these twenty years.

Æsop. [*Aside.*] She takes a long lease of lewdness: she'll be an admirable tenant to lust.

Amin. [*Walking hastily to and fro.*] People think when a woman is turned forty, she's old enough to turn out of the world: but I say, when a woman is turned forty, she's old enough to have more wit. The most can be said is, her face is the worse for wearing: I'll answer for all the rest of her fabric. The men would be to be pitied, by my troth would they, if we should quit the stage, and leave 'em nothing but a parcel of young pert sluts, that neither know how to speak sense, nor keep themselves clean. But don't let 'em fear, we a'nt going yet.—[ÆSOP *stares upon her, and as she turns from him runs off the stage.*] How now! What, left alone! An unmannerly piece of deformity! Methinks he might have had sense enough to have made love to me. But I have found men strangely dull for these last ten or twelve years. Sure they'll mend in time, or the world won't be worth living in.

For let philosophers say all they can,
The source of woman's joys is placed in man.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The same.*

Enter LEARCHUS *and* EUPHRONIA, DORIS *following at a distance.*

Lear. [*To* EUPHRONIA.] I must tell you, mistress, I'm too mild with you; parents should never entreat their children, nor will I hereafter. Therefore, in a word, let Oronces be loved, let Æsop be hated; let one be a peacock, let t'other be a bat. I'm father, you are daughter; I command, and you shall obey.

Euph. I never yet did otherwise; nor shall I now, sir; but pray let reason guide you.

Lear. So it does. But 'tis my own, not yours, hussy.

Dor. Ah!—Well, I'll say no more; but were I in her place, by the mass I'd have a tug for't!

Lear. Demon, born to distract me! Whence art thou, in the name of fire and brimstone? Have not I satisfied thee? have not I paid thee what's thy due? and have not I turned thee out of doors, with orders never more to stride my threshold, ha? Answer, abominable spirit! what is't that makes thee haunt me?

Dor. A foolish passion, to do you good in spite of your teeth: pox on me for my zeal! I say.

Lear. And pox on thee, and thy zeal too! I say.

Dor. Now if it were not for her sake more than for yours, I'd leave all to your own management, to be revenged of you. But rather than I'll see that sweet thing sacrificed—I'll play the devil in your house.

Lear. Patience, I summon thee to my aid!

Dor. Passion, I defy thee! to the last drop of my blood I'll maintain my ground. What have you to charge me with? speak. I love your child better than you do, and you can't bear that, ha? is't not so? Nay, it's well y'are ashamed on't; there's some sign of grace still. Look you, sir, in few words, you'll make me mad; and 'twere enough to make anybody mad (who has brains enough to be so) to see so much virtue shipwrecked at the very port. The world never saw a virgin better qualified; so witty, so discreet, so modest, so chaste; in a word, I brought her up myself, and 'twould be the death of me to see so virtuous a maid become a lewd wife; which is the usual effect of parents' pride and covetousness.

Lear. How, strumpet! would anything be able to debauch my daughter?

Dor. Your daughter! yes your daughter, and myself into the bargain: a woman's but a woman; and I'll lay a hundred pound on nature's side. Come, sir, few words despatch business. Let who will be the wife of Æsop, she's a fool, or he's a cuckold. But you'll never have a true notion of this matter till you suppose yourself in your daughter's place. As thus:—You are a pretty, soft, warm, wishing young lady: I'm a straight, proper, handsome, vigorous, young fellow. You have a peevish, positive, covetous, old father, and he forces you to marry a little, lean, crooked, dry, sapless husband. This husband's gone abroad, you are left at home. I make you a visit; find you all alone; the servant pulls to the door; the devil comes in at the window. I begin to wheedle, you begin to melt; you like my person, and therefore believe all I say; so first I make you an atheist, and then I make you a whore. Thus the world goes, sir.

Lear. Pernicious pestilence! Has thy eternal tongue run down its larum yet?

Dor. Yes.

Lear. Then get out of my house, abomination!

Dor. I'll not stir a foot.

Lear. Who waits there? Bring me my great stick.

Dor. Bring you a stick! bring you a head-piece; that you'd call for, if you knew your own wants.

Lear. Death and furies, the devil, and so forth; I shall run distracted!

Euph. Pray, sir, don't be so angry at her. I'm sure she means well, though she may have an odd way of expressing herself.

Lear. What, you like her meaning? who doubts it, offspring of Venus! But I'll make you stay your stomach with meat of my choosing, you liquorish young baggage you! In a word, Æsop's the man; and to-morrow he shall be your lord and master. But since he can't be satisfied unless he has your heart, as well as all the rest of your trumpery, let me see you receive him in such a manner that he may think himself your choice as well as mine; 'twill make him esteem your judgment: for we usually guess at other people's understandings, by their approving our actions, and liking our faces. See here the great man comes!—[*To* DORIS.] Follow me, Insolence! and leave 'em to express their passion to each other.—[*To* EUPHRONIA.] Remember my last word to you is, obey.

Dor. [*Aside to* EUPHRONIA.] And remember my last advice to you is, rebel.

[*Exit* LEARCHUS. DORIS *following him.*

Euph. Alas! I'm good-natured; the last thing that's said to me usually leaves the deepest impression.

Enter ÆSOP; *they stand some time without speaking.*

Æsop. They say, that lovers, for want of words, have eyes to speak with. I'm afraid you do not understand the language of mine, since yours I find will make no answer to 'em. But I must tell you, lady,

There is a numerous train of youthful virgins,
That are endow'd with wealth and beauty too,

Who yet have thought it worth their pains and care
To point their darts at Æsop's homely breast;
Whilst you so much contemn what they pursue,
That a young senseless fop's preferr'd before me.

Euph. Did you but know that fop you dare to term so,
His very looks would fright you into nothing.

Æsop. A very bauble!

Euph. How!

Æsop. A butterfly!

Euph. I can't bear it!

Æsop. A parroquet can prattle and look gaudy.

Euph. It may be so; but let me paint him and you in your proper colours, I'll do it exactly, and you shall judge which I ought to choose.

Æsop. No, hold! I'm naturally not over-curious; besides, 'tis pride makes people have their pictures drawn.

Euph. Upon my word, sir, you may have yours taken a hundred times before anybody will believe 'tis done upon that account.

Æsop. [*Aside.*] How severe she is upon me!—[*Aloud.*] You are resolved then to persist, and be fond of your feather; sigh for a periwig, and die for a cravat-string?

Euph. Methinks, sir, you might treat with more respect
What I've thought fit to own I value;
Your affronts to him are doubly such to me.
If you continue your provoking language,
You must expect my tongue will sally too;
And if you are as wise as some would make you,
You can't but know I should have theme enough.

Æsop. But is it possible you can love so much as you pretend?

Euph. Why, do you question it?

Æsop. Because nobody loves so much as they pretend. But hark you, young lady! marriage is to last a long, long time;
And where one couple bless the sacred knot,
A train of wretches curse the institution.
You're in an age where hearts are young and tender,
A pleasing object gets admittance soon.
But since to marriage
There is annex'd this dreadful word, *For Ever,*
The following example ought to move you.

A peacock once of splendid show,
Gay, gaudy, foppish, vain—a beau,
Attack'd a fond young pheasant's heart
With such success,
He pleased her, though he made her smart;
He pierced her with so much address,
She smiled the moment that he fix'd his dart.
A cuckoo in a neighbouring tree,
Rich, honest, ugly, old—like me,
Loved her as he loved his life:
No pamper'd priest e'er studied more
To make a virtuous nun a whore,
Than he to get her for his wife.
But all his offers still were vain,
His limbs were weak, his face was plain;
Beauty, youth, and vigour weigh'd
With the warm desiring maid:
No bird, she cried, would serve her turn,
But what could quench as well as burn,
She'd have a young gallant; so one she had.
But ere a month was come and gone,
The bride began to change her tone,
She found a young gallant was an inconstant one.
She wander'd to a neighbouring grove,
Where after musing long on love,
She told her confidant, she found
When for one's life one must be bound,
(Though youth indeed was a delicious bait,)
An aged husband, rich, though plain,
Would give a slavish wife less pain;
And what was more, was sooner slain,
Which was a thing of weight.

Behold, young lady, here, the cuckoo of the fable:
I am deform'd, 'tis true, yet I have found
The means to make a figure amongst men,
That well has recompensed the wrongs of Nature.
My rival's beauty promises you much;
Perhaps my homely form might yield you more;
At least consider on't, 'tis worth your thought.

Euph. I must confess my fortune would be greater;
But what's a fortune to a heart like mine?
'Tis true, I'm but a young philosopher,
Yet in that little space my glass has run,
I've spent some time in search of happiness:
The fond pursuit I soon observed of riches,
Inclined me to inquire into their worth;
I found their value was not in themselves,
But in their power to grant what we could ask.
I then proceeded to my own desires,
To know what state of life would suit with them:
I found 'em moderate in their demands,
They neither ask'd for title, state, or power;
They slighted the aspiring post of envy:
'Tis true, they trembled at the name contempt;
A general esteem was all they wish'd;
And that I did not doubt might be obtain'd,
If furnish'd but with virtue and good-nature;
My fortune proved sufficient to afford me
Conveniences of life, and independence.
This, sir, was the result of my inquiry;
And by this scheme of happiness I build,
When I prefer the man I love to you.

Æsop. How wise, how witty, and how cleanly, young women grow, as soon as ever they are in love!

Euph. How foppish, how impertinent, and how nauseous are old men, when they pretend to be so too!

Æsop. How pert is youth!

Euph. How dull is age!

Æsop. Why so sharp, young lady?

Euph. Why so blunt, old gentleman?

Æsop. 'Tis enough; I'll to your father, I know how to deal with him, though I don't know how to deal with you. Before to-morrow noon, damsel, wife shall be written on your brow. [*Exit.*

Euph. Then before to-morrow night, statesman, husband shall be stamped upon your forehead. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* LEARCHUS'S *House.*

Enter ORONCES *and* DORIS.

Dor. Patience, I beseech you.

Oron. Patience! What, and see that lovely creature thrown into the arms of that pedantic monster: 'sdeath, I'd rather see the world reduced to atoms, mankind turned into crawfish, and myself an old woman!

Dor. So you think an old woman a very unfortunate thing, I find; but you are mistaken, sir; she may plague other folks, but she's as entertaining to herself as any one part of the creation.

Oron. [*Walking to and fro.*] She's the devil! —and I'm one of the damned, I think! But I'll make somebody howl for't, I will so.

Dor. You'll e'en do as all the young fellows in the town do, spoil your own sport: ah!—had young men's shoulders but old courtiers' heads upon 'em, what a delicious time would they have on't! For shame be wise; for your mistress' sake at least use some caution.

Oron. For her sake I'll respect, even like a deity, her father. He shall strike me, he shall tread upon me, and find me humbler even than a crawling worm, for I'll not turn again; but for Æsop, that unfinished lump, that chaos of humanity, I'll use him,—nay, expect it, for I'll do't—the first moment that I see him, I'll—

Dor. Not challenge him, I hope.—'Twould be a pretty sight truly, to see Æsop drawn up in battalia: fy, for shame! be wise once in your life; think of gaining time, by putting off the marriage for a day or two, and not of waging war with Pigmy. Yonder's the old gentleman walking by himself in the gallery; go and wheedle him, you know his weak side; he's good-natured in the bottom. Stir up his old fatherly bowels a little, I'll warrant you'll move him at last: go, get you gone, and play your part discreetly.

Oron. Well, I'll try; but if words won't do with one, blows shall with t'other; by heavens they shall. [*Exit.*

Dor. Nay, I reckon we shall have rare work on't by and by. Shield us, kind Heaven! what things are men in love! Now they are stocks and stones; then they are fire and quicksilver; first whining and crying, then swearing and damning; this moment they are in love, and next moment they are out of love. Ah! could we but live without 'em—but it's in vain to think on't. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The same.*

Enter ÆSOP *at one side of the stage,* MRS. FORGEWILL *at the other.*

Mrs. Forge. Sir, I'm your most devoted servant. What I say is no compliment, I do assure you.

Æsop. Madam, as far as you are really mine, I believe I may venture to assure you I am yours.

Mrs. Forge. I suppose, sir, you know that I'm a widow.

Æsop. Madam, I don't so much as know you are a woman.

Mrs. Forge. O surprising! why, I thought the whole town had known it. Sir, I have been a widow this twelvemonth.

Æsop. If a body may guess at your heart by your petticoat, lady, you don't design to be so a twelvemonth more.

Mrs. Forge. O bless me! not a twelvemonth! why, my husband has left me four squalling brats. Besides, sir, I'm undone.

Æsop. You seem as cheerful an undone lady as I have met with.

Mrs. Forge. Alas, sir, I have too great a spirit ever to let afflictions spoil my face. Sir, I'll tell you my condition; and that will lead me to my business with you. Sir, my husband was a scrivener.

Æsop. The deuse he was! I thought he had been a count at least.

Mrs. Forge. Sir, 'tis not the first time I have been taken for a countess; my mother used to say, as I lay in my cradle, I had the air of a woman of quality; and, truly, I have always lived like such. My husband, indeed, had something sneaking in him, (as most husbands have, you know, sir,) but from the moment I set foot in his house, bless me, what a change was there! His pewter was turned into silver, his goloshoes into a glass coach, and his little travelling mare into a pair of Flanders horses. Instead of a greasy cookmaid, to wait at table, I had four tall footmen in clean linen; all things became new and fashionable, and nothing looked awkward in my family. My furniture was the wonder of my neighbourhood, and my clothes the admiration of the whole town; I had a necklace that was envied by the queen, and a pair of pendants that set a duchess a-crying. In a word, I saw nothing I liked but I bought it; and my husband, good man, durst ne'er refuse paying for't. Thus I lived, and I flourished, till he sickened and died; but, ere he was cold in his grave, his creditors plundered my house. But what pity it was to see fellows with dirty shoes come into my best rooms, and touch my hangings with their filthy fingers! You won't blame me, sir, if, with all my courage, I weep at this sensible part of my misfortune.

Æsop. A very sad story truly!

Mrs. Forge. But now, sir, to my business. Having been informed this morning that the king has appointed a great sum of money for the marriage of young women who have lived well and are fallen to decay, I am come to acquaint you I have two strapping daughters just fit for the matter, and to desire you'll help 'em to portions out of the king's bounty; that they mayn't whine and pine, and be eaten up with the green-sickness, as half the young women in the town are, or would be, if there were not more helps for a disease than one. This, sir, is my business.

Æsop. And this, madam, is my answer:—

A crawling toad, all speckled o'er,
Vain, gaudy, painted, patch'd—a whore,

Seeing a well-fed ox hard by,
Regards him with an envious eye,
And (as the poets tell)
"Ye gods, I cannot bear't!" quoth she,
"I'll burst, or be as big as he!"
And so began to swell.
Her friends and kindred round her came,
They show'd her she was much to blame,
The thing was out of reach.
She told 'em they were busy folk,
And when her husband would have spoke,
She bid him kiss her br—h.
With that they all e'en gave her o'er,
And she persisted as before,
Till, with a deal of strife,
She swell'd at last so much her spleen,
She burst like one that we have seen,
Who was a scrivener's wife.

This, widow, I take to be your case, and that of a great many others; for this is an age where most people get falls by clambering too high, to reach at what they should not do. The shoemaker's wife reduces her husband to a cobbler, by endeavouring to be as spruce as the tailor's; the tailor's brings hers to a botcher, by going as fine as the mercer's; the mercer's lowers hers to a foreman, by perking up to the merchant's; the merchant's wears hers to a broker, by strutting up to quality; and quality bring theirs to nothing, by striving to outdo one another. If women were humbler, men would be honester. Pride brings want, want makes rogues, rogues come to be hanged, and the devil alone's the gainer. Go your ways home, woman; and, as your husband maintained you by his pen, maintain yourself by your needle; put your great girls to service, employment will keep 'em honest; much work, and plain diet, will cure the green-sickness as well as a husband.

Mrs. Forge. Why, you pitiful pigmy, preaching, canting, pickthank! you little, sorry, crooked, dry, withered eunuch! do you know that—

Æsop. I know that I'm so deformed you han't wit enough to describe me; but I have this good quality, that a foolish woman can never make me angry.

Mrs. Forge. Can't she so! I'll try that, I will.

[*She falls upon him, holds his hands, and boxes his ears.*

Æsop. Help! help! help!

Enter Servants. *She runs off, they after her.*

Nay, e'en let her go—let her go—don't bring her back again. I'm for making a bridge of gold for my enemy to retreat upon.—I'm quite out of breath. —A terrible woman, I protest!

Enter Sir Polidorus Hogstye *drunk, in a hunting dress, with a* Huntsman, Groom, Falconer, *and other* Servants; *one leading a couple of hounds, another greyhounds, a third a spaniel, a fourth a gun upon his shoulder, the* Falconer *a hawk upon his fist, &c.*

Sir Pol. Haux! Haux! Haux! Haux! Haux! Joular, there, boy! Joular! Joular! Tinker! Pedlar! Miss! Miss! Miss! Miss! Miss!—Blood and oons!—Oh, there he is; that must be he, I have seen his picture.—[*Reeling upon* Æsop.] Sir—if your name's Æsop—I'm your humble servant.

Æsop. Sir, my name is Æsop, at your service.

Sir Pol. Why, then, sir—compliments being passed on both sides, with your leave—we'll proceed to business.—Sir, I'm by profession—a gentleman of—three thousand pounds a—year, sir. I keep a good pack of hounds, and a good stable of horses.—[*To his* Groom.] How many horses have I, sirrah?—Sir, this is my groom.

[*Presenting him to Æsop.*

Groom. Your worship has six coach-horses (cut and long-tail,) two runners, half-a-dozen hunters, four breeding mares, and two blind stallions, besides pads, routs, and dog-horses.

Sir Pol. Look you there, sir, I scorn to tell a lie. He that questions my honour—he's a son of a whore. But to business.—Having heard, sir, that you were come to this town, I have taken the pains to come hither too, though I had a great deal of business upon my hands, for I have appointed three justices of the peace to hunt with 'em this morning—and be drunk with 'em in the afternoon. But the main chance must be looked to—and that's this—I desire, sir, you'll tell the king from me—I don't like these taxes—in one word as well as in twenty—I don't like these taxes.

Æsop. Pray, sir, how high may you be taxed?

Sir Pol. How high may I be taxed, sir!—Why, I may be taxed, sir,—four shillings in the pound, sir; one-half I pay in money—and t'other half I pay in perjury, sir.—Hey, Joular! Joular! Joular! haux! haux! haux! haux! haux! whoo! hoo!—Here's the best hound-bitch in Europe. Zoons is she. And I had rather kiss her than kiss my wife —rot me if I had not. But, sir, I don't like these taxes.

Æsop. Why, how would you have the war carried on?

Sir Pol. War carried on, sir!—Why, I had rather have no war carried on at all, sir, than pay taxes. I don't desire to be ruined, sir.

Æsop. Why you say you have three thousand pounds a-year.

Sir Pol. And so I have, sir.—Lettacre!—Sir, this is my steward.—How much land have I, Lettacre?

Lettacre. Your worship has three thausand paunds a-year, as good lond as any's in the caunty; and two thausand paunds worth of wood to cut dawne at your worship's pleasure, and put the money in your pocket.

Sir Pol. Look you there, sir, what have you to say to that?

Æsop. I have to say, sir, that you may pay your taxes in money, instead of perjury, and still have a better revenue than I'm afraid you deserve. What service do you do your king, sir?

Sir Pol. None at all, sir: I'm above it.

Æsop. What service may you do your country, pray?

Sir Pol. I'm justice of the peace—and captain of the militia.

Æsop. Of what use are you to your kindred?

Sir Pol. I'm the head of the family, and have all the estate.

Æsop. What good do you do your neighbours?

Sir Pol. I give 'em their bellies full of beef every time they come to see me; and make 'em so drunk, they spew it up again before they go away.

Æsop. How do you use your tenants?

Sir Pol. Why, I screw up their rents till they break and run away; and if I catch 'em again, I let 'em rot in a jail.

Æsop. How do you treat your wife?

Sir Pol. I treat her all day with ill-nature and tobacco, and all night with snoring and a dirty shirt.

Æsop. How do you breed your children?

Sir Pol. I breed my eldest son—a fool; my youngest breed themselves, and my daughters—have no breeding at all.

Æsop. 'Tis very well, sir: I shall be sure to speak to the king of you; or if you think fit to remonstrate to him, by way of petition or address, how reasonable it may be to let men of your importance go scot-free, in the time of a necessary war, I'll deliver it in council, and speak to it as I ought.

Sir Pol. Why, sir, I don't disapprove your advice; but my clerk is not here, and I can't spell well.

Æsop. You may get it writ at your leisure, and send it me. But because you are not much used to draw up addresses perhaps, I'll tell you in general what kind of one this ought to be.

May it please your Majesty—You'll excuse me if I don't know your name and title.

Sir Pol. Sir Polidorus Hogstye, of Beast-Hall, in Swine-county.

Æsop. Very well.

May it please your Majesty:

Polidorus Hogstye, of Beast-Hall, in Swine-county, most humbly represents, that he hates to pay taxes, the dreadful consequences of 'em being inevitably these, that he must retrench two dishes in ten, where not above six of 'em are designed for gluttony.

Four bottles out of twenty; where not above fifteen of 'em are for drunkenness.

Six horses out of thirty; of which not above twenty are kept for state.

And four servants out of a score; where one half do nothing but make work for t'other.

To this deplorable condition must your important subject be reduced, or forced to cut down his timber, which he would willingly preserve against an ill run at dice.

And as to the necessity of the war for the security of the kingdom, he neither knows nor cares whether it be necessary or not.

He concludes with his prayers for your majesty's life, upon condition you will protect him and his fox-hounds at Beast-Hall without e'er a penny of money.

This, sir, I suppose, is much what you would be at.

Sir Pol. Exactly, sir; I'll be sure to have one drawn up to the selfsame purpose; and next fox-hunting I'll engage half the company shall set their hands to't. Sir, I am your—most devoted servant; and if you please to let me see you at Beast-Hall, here's my huntsman, Houndsfoot, will show you a fox shall lead you through so many hedges and briars, you shall have no more clothes on your back in half an hour's time—than you had—in the womb of your mother.—Haux! haux! haux! &c.

[*Exit shouting, followed by his attendants.*

Æsop. O tempora! O mores!

Enter Mr. Fruitful *and* Mrs. Fruitful.

Mr. Fruit. Heavens preserve the noble Æsop, grant him long life and happy days!

Mrs. Fruit. And send him a fruitful wife, with a hopeful issue!

Æsop. And what is it I'm to do for you, good people, to make you amends for all these friendly wishes?

Mr. Fruit. Sir, here's myself and my wife—

Mrs. Fruit. Sir, here's I and my husband—[*To* Mr. Fruitful.] Let me speak in my turn, goodman Forward.—[*To* Æsop.] Sir, here's I and my husband, I say, think we have as good pretensions to the king's favour as ever a lord in the land.

Æsop. If you have no better than some lords in the land, I hope you won't expect much for your service.

Mr. Fruit. An't please you, you shall be judge yourself.

Mrs. Fruit. That's as he gives sentence, Mr. Littlewit; who gave you power to come to a reference? If he does not do us right, the king himself shall; what's to be done here!—[*To* Æsop.] Sir, I'm forced to correct my husband a little; poor man, he is not used to court-business; but to give him his due, he's ready enough at some things. Sir, I have had twenty fine children by him; fifteen of 'em are alive, and alive like to be; five tall daughters are wedded and bedded, and ten proper sons serve their king and their country.

Æsop. A goodly company, upon my word!

Mrs. Fruit. Would all men take as much pains for the peopling the kingdom, we might tuck up our aprons, and cry a fig for our enemies! but we have such a parcel of drones amongst us.—Hold up your head, husband.—He's a little out of countenance, sir, because I chid him; but the man's a very good man at the bottom. But to come to my business, sir; I hope his majesty will think it reasonable to allow me something for the service I have done him; 'tis pity but labour should be encouraged, especially when what one has done, one has done't with a good-will.

Æsop. What profession are you of, good people?

Mrs. Fruit. My husband's an innkeeper, sir; he bears the name, but I govern the house.

Æsop. And what posts are your sons in, in the service?

Mrs. Fruit. Sir, there are four monks.

Mr. Fruit. Three attorneys.

Mrs. Fruit. Two scriveners.

Mr. Fruit. And an exciseman.

Æsop. The deuse o' the service! why, I thought they had been all in the army.

Mrs. Fruit. Not one, sir.

Æsop. No, so it seems, by my troth! Ten sons that serve their country, quotha! monks, attorneys, scriveners, and excisemen, serve their country with a vengeance. You deserve to be rewarded, truly; you deserve to be hanged, you wicked people you! Get you gone out of my sight: I never was so angry in my life. [*Exit.*

Mr. Fruit. So; who's in the right now, you or I? I told you what would come on't; you must be always a-breeding, and breeding, and the king would take care of 'em, and the queen would take care of 'em: and always some pretence or other there was. But now we have got a great kennel of whelps, and the devil will take care of 'em, for aught I see. For your sons are all rogues, and your daughters are all whores; you know they are.

Mrs. Fruit. What, you are a grudging of your pains now, you lazy, sluggish, phlegmatic drone! You have a mind to die of a lethargy, have you? but I'll raise your spirits for you, I will so. Get you gone home, go; go home, you idle sot, you. I'll raise your spirits for you!

[*Exit, pushing* Mr. Fruitful *before her.*

Re-enter ÆSOP.

Æsop. Monks, attorneys, scriveners, and excisemen!

Enter ORONCES.

Oron. O here he is.—Sir, I have been searching for you, to say two words to you.

Æsop. And now you have found me, sir, what are they?

Oron. They are, sir—that my name's Oronces: you comprehend me.

Æsop. I comprehend your name.

Oron. And not my business?

Æsop. Not I, by my troth.

Oron. Then I shall endeavour to teach you, Monsieur Æsop.

Æsop. And I to learn it, Monsieur Oronces.

Oron. Know, sir—that I admire Euphronia.

Æsop. Know, sir—that you are in the right on't.

Oron. But I pretend, sir, that nobody else shall admire her.

Æsop. Then I pretend, sir, she won't admire you.

Oron. Why, so, sir?

Æsop. Because, sir—

Oron. What, sir?

Æsop. She's a woman, sir.

Oron. What then, sir?

Æsop. Why then, sir, she desires to be admired by every man she meets.

Oron. Sir, you are too familiar.

Æsop. Sir, you are too haughty; I must soften that harsh tone of yours: It don't become you, sir; it makes a gentleman appear a porter, sir: and that you may know the use of good language, I'll tell you what once happened.

Once on a time—

Oron. I'll have none of your old wives' fables, sir, I have no time to lose; therefore, in a word—

Æsop. In a word, be mild: for nothing else will do you service. Good manners and soft words have brought many a difficult thing to pass. Therefore hear me patiently.

A cook one day, who had been drinking,
(Only as many times, you know,
You spruce, young, witty beaux will do,
To avoid the dreadful pain of thinking,)
Had orders sent him to behead
A goose, like any chaplain fed.
He took such pains to set his knife right,
'T had done one good to have lost one's life by't.
But many men have many minds,
There's various tastes in various kinds;
A swan (who by mistake he seized)
With wretched life was better pleased:
For as he went to give the blow,
In tuneful notes she let him know,
She neither was a goose, nor wish'd
To make her exit so.
The cook (who thought of nought but blood,
Except it were the grease,
For that you know's his fees)
To hear her sing, in great amazement stood.
"Cods-fish!" quoth he, "'twas well you spoke,
For I was just upon the stroke:
Your feathers have so much of goose,
A drunken cook could do no less
Than think you one; that you'll confess:
But y'have a voice so soft, so sweet,
That rather than you shall be eat,
The house shall starve for want of meat:"
And so he turned her loose.

Now, sir, what say you? Will you be the swan or the goose?

Oron. The choice can't sure be difficult to make;
I hope you will excuse my youthful heat,
Young men and lovers have a claim to pardon:
But since the faults of age have no such plea,
I hope you'll be more cautious of offending.
The flame that warms Euphronia's heart and mine
Has long, alas! been kindled in our breasts:
Even years are past since our two souls were wed,
'Twould be adultery but to wish to part 'em.
And would a lump of clay alone content you,
A mistress cold and senseless in your arms,
Without the least remains or signs of life,
Except her sighs, to mourn her absent lover?
Whilst you should press her in your eager arms,
With fond desire and ecstacy of love,
Would it not pierce you to the very soul,
To see her tears run trickling down her cheeks,
And know their fountain meant 'em all to me?
Could you bear this?
Yet thus the gods revenge themselves on those
Who stop the happy course of mutual love.
If you must be unfortunate one way,
Choose that where justice may support your grief,
And shun the weighty curse of injured lovers.

Æsop. Why, this is pleading like a swan indeed!
Were anything at stake but my Euphronia—

Oron. Your Euphronia, sir!—

Æsop. The goose—take heed—
Were anything, I say, at stake but her,
Your plea would be too strong to be refused.
But our debate's about a lady, sir,
That's young, that's beautiful, that's made for love.
—So am not I, you'll say? But you're mistaken; sir;
I'm made to love, though not to be beloved.
I have a heart like yours; I've folly too:
I've every instrument of love like others.

Oron. But, sir, you have not been so long a lover;
Your passion's young and tender,
'Tis easy for you to become its master;
Whilst I should strive in vain: mine's old and fix'd.

Æsop. The older 'tis, the easier to be govern'd. Were mine of as long a standing, 'twere possible I might get the better on't. Old passions are like old men; weak, and soon jostled into the kennel.

Oron. Yet age sometimes is strong, even to the verge of life.

Æsop. Ay, but there our comparison don't hold.

Oron. You are too merry to be much in love.

Æsop. And you too sad to be so long.

Oron. My grief may end my days, so quench my flame,
But nothing else can e'er extinguish it.

Æsop. Don't be discouraged, sir; I have seen many a man outlive his passion twenty years.

Oron. But I have sworn to die Euphronia's slave.

Æsop. A decayed face always absolves a lover's oath.

Oron. Lovers whose oaths are made to faces then:
But 'tis Euphronia's soul that I adore,
Which never can decay.

Æsop. I would fain see a young fellow in love with a soul of threescore.

Oron. Quit but Euphronia to me, and you shall;
At least if Heaven's bounty will afford us
But years enough to prove my constancy,
And this is all I ask the gods and you. [*Exit.*

Æsop. A good pretence however to beg long life. How grossly do the inclinations of the flesh impose upon the simplicity of the spirit! Had this young fellow but studied anatomy, he'd have found the source of his passion lay far from his mistress's soul. Alas! alas! had women no more charms in their bodies than what they have in their minds, we should see more wise men in the world, much fewer lovers and poets. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* LEARCHUS'S *House.*

Enter EUPHRONIA *and* DORIS.

Euph. Heavens, what is't you make me do, Doris? Apply myself to the man I loathe; beg favours from him I hate; seek a reprieve from him I abhor; 'tis low, 'tis mean, 'tis base in me.

Dor. Why, you hate the devil as much as you do Æsop, (or within a small matter,) and should you think it a scandal to pray him to let you alone a day or two, if he were going to run away with you; ha?

Euph. I don't know what I think, nor what I say, nor what I do: but sure thou'rt not my friend thus to advise me.

Dor. I advise! I advise nothing; e'en follow your own way; marry him, and make much of him. I have a mind to see some of his breed; if you like it, I like it. He shan't breed out of me only; that's all I have to take care of.

Euph. Prithee don't distract me.

Dor. Why, to-morrow's the day, fixed and firm, you know it. Much meat, little order, great many relations, few friends, horse-play, noise, and bawdy stories, all's ready for a complete wedding.

Euph. Oh! what shall I do?

Dor. Nay, I know this makes you tremble; and yet your tender conscience scruples to drop one hypocritical curtsy, and say, pray, Mr. Æsop, be so kind to defer it a few days longer.

Euph. Thou knowest I cannot dissemble.

Dor. I know you can dissemble well enough when you should not do't. Do you remember how you used to plague your poor Oronces; make him believe you loathed him, when you could have kissed the ground he went on; affront him in all public places; ridicule him in all company; abuse him wherever you went: and when you had reduced him within ambs-ace of hanging or drowning then come home with tears in your eyes, and cry, Now, Doris, let's go lock ourselves up, and talk of my dear Oronces.—Is not this true?

Euph. Yes, yes, yes. But, prithee, have some compassion of me. Come, I'll do anything thou biddest me.—What shall I say to this monster? tell me, and I'll obey thee.

Dor. Nay, then there's some hopes of you.—Why you must tell him—'Tis natural to you to dislike folks at first sight: that since you have considered him better, you find your aversion abated: that though perhaps it may be a hard matter for you ever to think him a beau, you don't despair in time of finding out his *je-ne-sais-quoi.* And that on t'other side; though you have hitherto thought (as most young women do) that nothing could remove your first affection, yet you have very great hopes in the natural inconstancy of your sex. Tell him, 'tis not impossible, a change may happen, provided he gives you time: but that if he goes to force you, there's another piece of nature peculiar to woman, which may chance to spoil all, and that's contradiction. Ring that argument well in his ears: he's a philosopher, he knows it has weight in't. In short, wheedle, whine, flatter, lie, weep, spare nothing; it's a moist age, women have tears enough; and when you have melted him down, and gained more time, we'll employ it in closet-debates how to cheat him to the end of the chapter.

Euph. But you don't consider, Doris, that by this means I engage myself to him; and can't afterwards with honour retreat.

Dor. Madam, I know the world.—Honour's a jest, when jilting's useful. Besides, he that would have you break your oath with Oronces, can never have the impudence to blame you for cracking your word with himself. But who knows what may happen between the cup and the lip? Let either of the old gentlemen die, and we ride triumphant. Would I could but see the statesman sick a little, I'd recommend a doctor to him, a cousin of mine, a man of conscience, a wise physician; tip but the wink, he understands you.

Euph. Thou wicked wench, wouldst poison him?

Dor. I don't know what I would do. I think, I study, I invent, and somehow I will get rid of him. I do more for you, I'm sure, than you and your knight-errant do together for yourselves.

Euph. Alas! both he and I do all we can; thou knowest we do.

Dor. Nay, I know y'are willing enough to get together; but y'are a couple of helpless things, Heaven knows.

Euph. Our stars, thou seest, are bent to opposition.

Dor. Stars!—I'd fain see the stars hinder me from running away with a man I liked.

Euph. Ay, but thou knowest, should I disoblige my father, he'd give my portion to my younger sister.

Dor. Ay, there the shoe pinches, there's the love of the age! Ah!—to what an ebb of passion are lovers sunk in these days! Give me a woman that runs away with a man when his whole estate's packed up in his snapsack: that tucks up her coats to her knees; and through thick and through thin, from quarters to camp, trudges heartily on, with a child at her back, another in her arms, and a brace in her belly: there's flame with a witness, where this is the effects on't. But we must have love in a featherbed: forsooth, a coach and six

horses, clean linen, and a caudle! Fy, for shame! —O ho, here comes our man! Now show yourself a woman, if you are one.

Enter Æsop.

Æsop. I'm told, fair virgin, you desire to speak with me. Lovers are apt to flatter themselves; I take your message for a favour. I hope 'twas meant so.

Euph. Favours from women are so cheap of late, men may expect 'em truly without vanity.

Æsop. If the women are so liberal, I think the men are generous too on their side. 'Tis a well-bred age, thank Heaven; and a deal of civility there passes between the two sexes.—What service is't that I can do you, lady?

Euph. Sir, I have a small favour to entreat you.

Æsop. What is't? I don't believe I shall refuse you.

Euph. What if you should promise me you won't?

Æsop. Why then I should make a divorce between my good-breeding and my sense, which ought to be as sacred a knot as that of wedlock.

Euph. Dare you not trust then, sir, the thing you love?

Æsop. Not when the thing I love don't love me: never!

Dor. Trust is sometimes the way to be beloved.

Æsop. Ay, but 'tis oftener the way to be cheated.

Euph. Pray promise me you'll grant my suit.

Dor. 'Tis a reasonable one, I give you my word for't.

Æsop. If it be so, I do promise to grant it.

Dor. That's still leaving yourself judge.

Æsop. Why, who's more concerned in the trial?

Dor. But nobody ought to be judge in their own cause.

Æsop. Yet he that is so, is sure to have no wrong done him.

Dor. But if he does wrong to others, that's worse.

Æsop. Worse for them, but not for him.

Dor. True politician, by my troth!

Æsop. Men must be so when they have to do with sharpers.

Euph. If I should tell you then there were a possibility I might be brought to love you, you'd scarce believe me.

Æsop. I should hope as a lover, and suspect as a statesman.

Dor. [*Aside.*] Love and wisdom! There's the passion of the age again.

Euph. You have lived long, sir, and observed much: did you never see Time produce strange changes?

Æsop. Amongst women, I must confess I have.

Euph. Why, I'm a woman, sir.

Æsop. Why, truly, that gives me some hopes.

Euph. I'll increase 'em, sir; I have already been in love two years.

Dor. And time, you know, wears all things to tatters.

Æsop. Well observed.

Euph. What if you should allow me some to try what I can do?

Æsop. Why, truly, I would have patience a day or two, if there were as much probability of my being your new gallant, as perhaps there may be of changing your old one.

Dor. She shall give you fair play for't, sir; opportunity and leave to prattle, and that's what carries most women in our days. Nay, she shall do more for you. You shall play with her fan; squeeze her little finger; buckle her shoe; read a romance to her in the arbour; and saunter in the woods on a moonshiny night. If this don't melt her, she's no woman, or you no man.

Æsop. I'm not a man to melt a woman that way:
I know myself, and know what they require.
'Tis through a woman's eye you pierce her heart.
And I've no darts can make their entrance there.

Dor. You are a great statesman, sir; but I find you know little of our matters. A woman's heart is to be entered forty ways. Every sense she has about her keeps a door to it. With a smock-face, and a feather, you get in at her eyes. With powerful nonsense, in soft words, you creep in at her ears. An essenced peruke, and a sweet handkerchief, lets you in at her nose. With a treat, and a boxfull of sweetmeats, you slip in at her mouth: and if you would enter by her sense of feeling, 'tis as beaten a road as the rest. What think you now, sir? There are more ways to the woods than one, you see.

Æsop. Why, you're an admirable pilot; I don't doubt but you have steered many a ship safe to harbour. But I'm an old stubborn seaman; I must sail by my own compass still.

Euph. And, by your obstinacy, lose your vessel.

Æsop. No: I'm just entering into port; we'll be married to-morrow.

Euph. For Heaven's sake, defer it some days longer! I cannot love you yet, indeed I cannot.

Æsop. Nor never will, I dare swear.

Euph. Why then will you marry me?

Æsop. Because I love you.

Euph. If you loved me, you would never make me miserable.

Æsop. Not if I loved you for your sake; but I love you for my own.

Dor. [*Aside.*] There's an old rogue for you.

Euph. [*Weeping.*] Is there no way left! must I be wretched?

Æsop. 'Tis but resolving to be pleased. You can't imagine the strength of resolution. I have seen a woman resolve to be in the wrong all the days of her life; and by the help of her resolution she has kept her word to a tittle.

Euph. Methinks the subject we're upon should be of weight enough to make you serious.

Æsop. Right. To-morrow morning, pray be ready; you'll find me so: I'm serious. Now I hope you are pleased. [*Turning away from her.*

Euph. Break heart! for if thou holdest, I'm miserable. [*Going off weeping, and leaning upon* Doris.

Dor. [*To* Æsop.] Now may the extravagance of a lewd wife, with the insolence of a virtuous one, join hand in hand to bring thy grey hairs to the grave. [*Exeunt* Euphronia *and* Doris.

Æsop. My old friend wishes me well to the last, I see.

Enter Learchus *hastily, followed by* Oronces.

Oron. Pray hear me, sir.

Lear. 'Tis in vain: I'm resolved, I tell you.—Most noble Æsop, since you are pleased to accept of my poor offspring for your consort, be so charitable to my old age, to deliver me from the impertinence of youth, by making her your wife this

instant; for there's a plot against my life; they have resolved to tease me to death to-night, that they may break the match to-morrow morning. Marry her this instant, I entreat you.

Æsop. This instant, say you!

Lear. This instant; this very instant.

Æsop. 'Tis enough; get all things ready; I'll be with you in a moment. [*Exit*.

Lear. Now, what say you, Mr. Flamefire? I shall have the whiphand of you presently.

Oron. Defer it but till to-morrow, sir.

Lear. That you may run away with her to-night; ha?—Sir, your most obedient, humble servant.—Hey, who waits there?

Enter Servant.

Call my daughter to me: quick.—[*Exit* Servant.] I'll give her her despatches presently.

Re-enter EUPHRONIA.

Euph. D'ye call, sir?

Lear. Yes I do, minx. Go shift yourself, and put on your best clothes. You are to be married.

Euph. Married, sir!

Lear. Yes, married, madam; and that this instant too.

Euph. Dear sir!

Lear. Not a word: obedience and a clean smock; despatch!—[*Exit* EUPHRONIA *weeping*.] Sir, your most obedient humble servant. [*Going*.

Oron. Yet hear what I've to say.

Lear. And what have you to say, sir?

Oron. Alas! I know not what I have to say!

Lear. Very like so.—That's a sure sign he's in love now.

Oron. Have you no bowels?

Lear. Ha! ha! bowels in a parent; here's a young fellow for you!—Hark thee, stripling; being in a very merry humour, I don't care if I discover some paternal secrets to thee. Know then, that how humoursome, how whimsical soever we may appear, there's one fixed principle that runs through almost the whole race of us; and that's to please ourselves. Why dost think I got my daughter? Why, there was something in't that pleased me. Why dost think I marry my daughter? Why to please myself still. And what is't that pleases me? Why, my interest; what dost think it should be? If Æsop's my son-in-law, he'll make me a lord: if thou art my son-in-law, thou'lt make me a grandfather. Now I having more mind to be a lord than a grandfather, give my daughter to him, and not to thee.

Oron. Then shall her happiness weigh nothing with you?

Lear. Not this. If it did, I'd give her to thee, and not to him.

Oron. Do you think forced marriage the way to keep women virtuous?

Lear. No; nor I don't care whether women are virtuous or not.

Oron. You know your daughter loves me.

Lear. I do so.

Oron. What if the children that Æsop may happen to father should chance to be begot by me?

Lear. Why, then Æsop would be the cuckold, not I.

Oron. Is that all your care?

Lear. Yes: I speak as a father.

Oron. What think you of your child's concern in t'other world?

Lear. Why, I think it my child's concern, not mine. I speak as a father.

Oron. Do you remember you once gave me your consent to wed your daughter?

Lear. I did.

Oron. Why did you so?

Lear. Because you were the best match that offered at that time. I did like a father.

Oron. Why then, sir, I'll do like a lover. I'll make you keep your word, or cut your throat.

Lear. Who waits there, ha?

Enter Servants.

Seize me that bully there. Carry him to prison, and keep him safe. [*They seize him*.

Oron. Why, you won't use me thus?

Lear. Yes, but I will though.—Away with him! —Sir, your most humble servant: I wish you a good night's rest; and as far as a merry dream goes, my daughter's at your service.

Oron. Death and furies!

[*Exeunt* Servants *with* ORONCES.

Lear. [*Singing*.]

Dol, de tol dol, dol dol, de tol dol:
Lilly Burleighre's lodged in a bough.

Enter a Troop of Musicians, Dancers, *&c*.

Lear. How now! what have we got here?

Mus. Sir, we are a troop of trifling fellows, fiddlers and dancers, come to celebrate the wedding of your fair daughter, if your honour pleases to give us leave.

Lear. With all my heart: but who do you take me for, sir; ha?

Mus. I take your honour for our noble governor of Cyzicus.

Lear. Governor of Cyzicus! Governor of a cheese-cake! I'm father-in-law to the great Æsop, sirrah.—[*All bow to him*.]—[*Aside*.] I shall be a great man.—[*Aloud*.] Come, tune your fiddles; shake your legs; get all things ready. My son-in-law will be here presently.—I shall be a great man. [*Exit*.

1 *Mus*. A great marriage, brother: what dost think will be the end on't?

2 *Mus*. Why, I believe we shall see three turns upon't. This old fellow here will turn fool; his daughter will turn strumpet; and his son-in-law will turn 'em both out of doors. But that's nothing to thee nor me, as long as we are paid for our fiddling. So tune away, gentlemen.

1 *Mus*. D'ye hear, trumpets, when the bride appears, salute her with a melancholy waft. 'Twill suit her humour; for I guess she mayn't be over-well pleased.

Re-enter LEARCHUS *with several* Gentlemen, *and a* Priest.

Lear. Gentlemen and friends, y'are all welcome. I have sent to as many of you as our short time would give me leave, to desire you would be witnesses of the honour the great Æsop designs ourself and family.—Hey; who attends there?

Enter Servant.

Go let my daughter know I wait for her.—[*Exit* Servant.] 'Tis a vast honour that is done me, gentlemen.

Gent. It is indeed, my lord.

Lear. [*Aside*.] Look you there; if they don't call me my lord already—I shall be a great man.

Re-enter EUPHRONIA *weeping, and leaning upon* DORIS, *both in deep mourning.*

Lear. How now! what's here? all in deep mourning!—Here's a provoking baggage for you.

[*The trumpets sound a melancholy air till* ÆSOP *appears; and then the violins and hautboys strike up a Lancashire hornpipe.*

Re-enter ÆSOP *in a gay foppish dress, long peruke, &c., a gaudy equipage of* Pages *and* Footmen, *all enter in an airy brisk manner.*

Æsop. [*In an affected tone to* EUPHRONIA.] Gad take my soul, mame, I hope I shall please you now!—Gentlemen all, I'm your humble servant. I'm going to be a very happy man, you see.—[*To* EUPHRONIA.] When the heat of the ceremony's over, if your ladyship pleases, mame, I'll wait upon you to take the air in the Park.—Hey, page; let there be a coach and six horses ready instantly.—[*Observing her dress.*] I vow to Gad, mame, I was so taken up with my good fortune, I did not observe the extreme fancy of your ladyship's wedding-clothes!—Infinitely pretty, as I hope to be saved! a world of variety, and not at all gaudy!—[*To* LEARCHUS.] My dear father-in-law, embrace me.

Lear. Your lordship does me too much honour.—[*Aside.*] I shall be a great man.

Æsop. Come, gentlemen, are all things ready? Where's the priest?

Priest. Here, my noble lord.

Æsop. Most reverend, will you please to say grace that I may fall to, for I'm very hungry, and here's very good meat.—But where's my rival all this while? The least we can do, is to invite him to the wedding.

Lear. My lord, he's in prison.

Æsop. In prison! how so!

Lear. He would have murdered me.

Æsop. A bloody fellow! But let's see him however. Send for him quickly. Ha, governor, that handsome daughter of yours, I will so mumble her!—

Lear. I shall be a great man.

Re-enter ORONCES, *pinioned and guarded.*

Æsop. O ho, here's my rival! Then we have all we want.—Advance, sir, if you please. I desire you'll do me the favour to be a witness to my marriage, lest one of these days you should take a fancy to dispute my wife with me.

Oron. Do you then send for me to insult me? 'Tis base in you.

Æsop. I have no time now to throw away upon points of generosity; I have hotter work upon my hands.—Come, priest, advance.

Lear. Pray hold him fast there; he has the devil and all of mischief in's eye.

Æsop. [*To* EUPHRONIA.] Will your ladyship please, mame, to give me your fair hand.—Heyday!

[*She refuses her hand.*

Lear. I'll give it you, my noble lord, if she won't.—[*Aside.*] A stubborn, self-willed, stiff-necked strumpet!

[LEARCHUS *holds out her hand to* ÆSOP, *who takes it;* ORONCES *stands on* ÆSOP'S *left hand, and the* Priest *before them.*

Æsop. Let my rival stand next me: of all men I'd have him be satisfied.

Oron. Barbarous inhuman monster!

Æsop. Now, priest, do thy office.

[*Flourish with the trumpets.*

Priest. Since the eternal laws of fate decree,
That he thy husband, she thy wife, should be,
May heaven take you to its care,
May Jupiter look kindly down,
Place on your heads contentment's crown;
And may his godhead never frown
Upon this happy pair.

[*Flourish again of trumpets. As the* Priest *pronounces the last line,* ÆSOP *joins* ORONCES *and* EUPHRONIA'S *hands.*

Oron. O happy change! Blessings on blessings wait on the generous Æsop.

Æsop. Happy, thrice happy may you ever be,
And if you think there's something due to me,
Pay it in mutual love and constancy.

Euph. [*To* ÆSOP.] You'll pardon me, most generous man,
If in the present transports of my soul,
Which you yourself have by your bounty caused,
My willing tongue is tied from uttering
The thoughts that flow from a most grateful heart.

Æsop. For what I've done I merit little thanks,
Since what I've done, my duty bound me to.
I would your father had acquitted his:
But he who's such a tyrant o'er his children
To sacrifice their peace to his ambition,
Is fit to govern nothing but himself.
And therefore, sir, at my return to court [*To* LEARCHUS.
I shall take care this city may be sway'd
By more humanity than dwells in you.

Lear. [*Aside.*] I shall be a great man.

Euph. [*To* ÆSOP.] Had I not reason, from your constant goodness,
To judge your bounty, sir, is infinite,
I should not dare to sue for farther favours:
But pardon me, if imitating Heaven and you,
I easily forgive my aged father,
And beg that Æsop would forgive him too.

[*Kneeling to him.*

Æsop. The injury he would have done to you
Was great indeed:
But 'twas a blessing he design'd for me.
If therefore you can pardon him, I may.
Your injured daughter, sir, has on her knees [*To* LEARCHUS.
Entreated for her cruel barbarous father;
And by her goodness has obtained her suit.
If in the remnant of your days you can find out some way to recompense her, do it, that men and gods may pardon you, as she and I have done.—But let me see, I have one quarrel still to make up. Where's my old friend Doris?

Dor. She's here, sir, at your service; and as much your friend as ever: true to her principles, and firm to her mistress. But she has a much better opinion of you now than she had half an hour ago.

Æsop. She has reason: for my soul appeared then as deformed as my body. But I hope now one may so far mediate for t'other, that provided I don't make love, the women won't quarrel with me; for they are worse enemies even than they are friends.—Come, gentlemen, I'll humour my dress a little longer, and share with you in the diversions these boon companions have prepared us. Let's take our places, and see how they can divert us.

[ÆSOP *leads* EUPHRONIA *to her place. All being seated, there follows a short concert of hautboys, trumpets, &c. After which a dance between an* Old Man *and a* Young Woman, *who shuns him still as he comes near her. At last he stops, and begins this dialogue, which they sing together.*

Old Man. Why so cold, and why so coy?
What I want in youth and fire,
I have in love and in desire:
To my arms, my love, my joy!
Why so cold, and why so coy?

Woman. 'Tis sympathy perhaps with you;
You are cold, and I'm so too.

Old Man. My years alone have froze my blood;
Youthful heat in female charms,
Glowing in my aged arms,
Would melt it down once more into a flood.

Woman. Women, alas, like flints, ne'er burn [alone;
To make a virgin know
There's fire within the stone,
Some manly steel must boldly strike the blow.

Old Man. Assist me only with your charms,
You'll find I'm man, and still am bold;
You'll find I still can strike, though old:
I only want your aid to raise my arm.

Enter a Youth, *who seizes on the* Young Woman.

Youth. Who talks of charms, who talks of aid?
I bring an arm
That wants no charm,
To rouse the fire that's in a flinty maid.
Retire, old age!—

Woman. Winter, begone!
Behold, the youthful Spring comes gaily on.
Here, here's a torch to light a virgin's fire!
To my arms, my love, my joy!
When women have what they desire,
They're neither cold nor coy.

[*She takes him in her arms. The song and dance ended,* ÆSOP *takes* EUPHRONIA *and* ORONCES *by the hands, leading them forwards.*

Æsop. By this time, my young eager couple, 'tis probable you would be glad to be alone; perhaps you'll have a mind to go to bed even without your supper; for brides and bridegrooms eat little on their wedding-night. But since if matrimony were worn as it ought to be, it would perhaps sit easier about us than usually it does, I'll give you one word of counsel, and so I shall release you. When one is out of humour, let the other be dumb. Let your diversions be such as both may have a share in 'em. Never let familiarity exclude respect. Be clean in your clothes, but nicely so in your persons. Eat at one table, lie in one room, but sleep in two beds: I'll tell the ladies why.— [*Turning to the boxes.*

In the sprightly month of May,
When males and females sport and play,
And kiss and toy away the day;
An eager sparrow and his mate,
Chirping on a tree were sate,
Full of love—and full of prate.
They talk'd of nothing but their fires,
Of raging heats and strong desires,
Of eternal constancy;
How true and faithful they would be,
Of this and that, and endless joys,
And a thousand more such toys:
The only thing they apprehended,
Was that their lives would be so short,
They could not finish half their sport
Before their days were ended.
But as from bough to bough they rove,
They chanced at last
In furious haste,
On a twig with birdlime spread,
(Want of a more downy bed)
To act a scene of love.
Fatal it proved to both their fires.
For though at length they broke away,
And balk'd the schoolboy of his prey,
Which made him weep the livelong day,
The bridegroom in the hasty strife,
Was stuck so fast to his dear wife,
That though he used his utmost art,
He quickly found it was in vain,
To put himself to further pain,
They never more must part.
A gloomy shade o'ercast his brow;
He found himself—I know not how:
He look'd—as husbands often do.
Where'er he moved he felt her still,
She kiss'd him oft against his will:
Abroad, at home, at bed and board,
With favours she o'erwhelm'd her lord.
Oft he turn'd his head away,
And seldom had a word to say.
Which absolutely spoil'd her play,
For she was better stored.
Howe'er at length her stock was spent,
(For female fires sometimes may be
Subject to mortality;)
So back to back they sit and sullenly repent.
But the mute scene was quickly ended,
The lady, for her share, pretended
The want of love lay at his door;
For her part she had still in store
Enough for him and twenty more,
Which could not be contented.
He answer'd her in homely words,
(For sparrows are but ill-bred birds,)
That he already had enjoy'd
So much, that truly he was cloy'd.
Which so provoked her spleen,
That after some good hearty prayers,
A jostle, and some spiteful tears,
They fell together by the ears,
And ne'er were fond again. [*Exeunt omnes.*

ÆSOP.

PART II.

SCENE I.

Enter several Players, *male and female. They salute* Æsop.

Æsop. Well, good people, who are all you?

All. Sir, we are players.

Æsop. Players! what players?

Play. Why, sir, we are stage-players, that's our calling: though we play upon other things too; some of us play upon the fiddle; some play upon the flute; we play upon one another; we play upon the town; and we play upon the patentees.

Osop. Patentees! prithee, what are they?

Play. Why, they are, sir—sir, they are—cod, I don't know what they are!—fish or flesh—masters or servants:—sometimes one—sometimes t'other, I think—just as we are in the mood.

Æsop. Why, I thought they had a lawful authority over you.

Play. Lawful authority, sir!—sir, we are free-born Englishmen, we care not for law nor authority neither, when we are out of humour.

Æsop. But I think they pretended at least to an authority over you; pray upon what foundation was it built?

Play. Upon a rotten one—if you'll believe us. Sir, I'll tell you what the projectors did: they embarked twenty thousand pound upon a leaky vessel.—She was built at Whitehall; I think they called her—the Patent—ay, the Patent: her keel was made of a broad seal—and the king gave them a white staff for their mainmast. She was a pretty tight frigate to look upon, indeed: they spared nothing to set her off; they gilded her, and painted her, and rigged, and gunned her; and so sent her a-privateering. But the first storm that blew, down went the mast! ashore went the ship!—Crack! says the keel:—Mercy! cried the pilot; but the wind was so high, his prayers could not be heard—so they split upon a rock—that lay hid under a petticoat.

Æsop. A very sad story, this: but what became of the ship's company?

Play. Why, sir, your humble servants here, who were the officers, and the best of the sailors—(little Ben amongst the rest) seized on a small bark that lay to our hand, and away we put to sea again. To say the truth, we were better manned than rigged, and ammunition was plaguy scarce amongst us. However, a-cruising we went, and some petty small prizes we have made; but the blessing of heaven not being among us—or how the devil 'tis, I can't tell; but we are not rich.

Æsop. Well, but what became of the rest of the crew?

Play. Why, sir, as for the scoundrels, they, poor dogs, stuck by the wreck. The captain gave them bread and cheese, and good words. He told them if they would patch her up, and venture t'other cruise, he'd prefer 'em all; so to work they went, and to sea they got her.

Æsop. I hope he kept his word with 'em.

Play. That he did; he made the boatswain's mate lieutenant; he made the cook doctor; he was forced to be purser, and pilot, and gunner himself; and the swabber took orders to be chaplain.

Æsop. But with such unskilful officers, I'm afraid, they'll hardly keep above water long.

Play. Why, truly, sir, we care not how soon they are under: but cursed folks thrive, I think. I know nothing else that makes 'em swim. I'm sure, by the rules of navigation, they ought to have overset long since; for they carry a great deal of sail, and have very little ballast.

Æsop. I'm afraid you ruin one another. I fancy if you were all in a ship together again, you'd have less work and more profit.

Play. Ah, sir—we are resolved we'll never sail under captain Patentee again.

Æsop. Prithee, why so?

Play. Sir, he has used us like dogs.

Wom. And bitches too, sir.

Æsop. I'm sorry to hear that; pray how was't he treated you?

Play. Sir, 'tis impossible to tell; he used us like the English at Amboyna.

Æsop. But I would know some particulars; tell me what 'twas he did to you.

Play. What he did, sir!—why, he did in the first place, sir—in the first place, sir, he did—ecod, I don't know what he did.—Can you tell, wife?

Wom. Yes, marry can I; and a burning shame it was too.

Play. Oh, I remember now, sir, he would not give us plums enough in our pudding.

Æsop. That indeed was very hard; but did he give you as many as he promised you?

Play. Yes, and more; but what of all that? we had not as many as we had a mind to.

1 *Wom.* Sir, my husband tells you truth.

Æsop. I believe he may. But what other wrongs did he do you?

1 *Wom.* Why, sir, he did not treat me with respect; 'twas not one day in three he would so much as bid me good-morrow.

2 *Wom.* Sir, he invited me to dinner, and never drank my health.

1 *Wom.* Then he cocked his hat at Mrs. Pert.

2 *Wom.* Yes, and told Mrs. Slippery he had as good a face as she had.

Æsop. Why, these were insufferable abuses!

2 *Play.* Then, sir, I did but come to him one day, and tell him I wanted fifty pound, and what do you think he did by me, sir—sir, he turned round upon his heel like a top—

1 *Play.* But that was nothing to the affront he put upon me, sir. I came to him, and in very civil words, as I thought, desired him to double my pay: sir, would you believe it? he had the barbarity to ask me if I intended to double my work; and because I told him no, sir—he did use me—good Lord, how he did use me!

Æsop. Prithee how?

1 *Play.* Why, he walked off, and answered me never a word.

Æsop. How had you patience?

1 *Play.* Sir, I had not patience. I sent him a challenge; and what do you think his answer was?—he sent me word I was a scoundrel son of a whore, and he would only fight me by proxy!

Æsop. Very fine!

1 *Play.* At this rate, sir, were we poor dogs used—till one frosty morning down he comes amongst us—and very roundly tells us—that for the future, no purchase no pay. They that would not work should not eat.—Sir, we at first asked him coolly and civilly, Why? His answer was, because the town wanted diversion, and he wanted money.—Our reply to this, sir, was very short; but I think to the purpose.

Æsop. What was it?

1 *Play.* It was, sir, that so we wallowed in plenty and ease—the town and he might be damned! This, sir, is the true history of separation—and we hope you'll stand our friend.

Æsop. I'll tell you what, sirs—

I once a pack of beagles knew
That much resembled—I know who;
With a good huntsman at their tail,
In full command,
With whip in hand,
They'd run apace
The cheerful chace,
And of their game were seldom known to fail.
But, being at length their chance to find
A huntsman of a gentler kind,
They soon perceived the rein was slack,
The word went quickly through the pack—
They one and all cried "Liberty!
This happy moment we are free,
We'll range the woods,
Like nymphs and gods,
And spend our mouths in praise of mutiny."
With that old Jowler trots away,
And Bowman singles out his prey;
Thunder bellow'd through the wood,
And swore he'd burst his guts with blood.
Venus tripp'd it o'er the plain,
With boundless hopes of boundless gain.
Juno, she slipp'd down the hedge,
But left her sacred word for pledge;
That all she pick'd up by-the-by
Should to the public treasury.
And well they might rely upon her;
For Juno was a bitch of honour.
In short they all had hopes to see
A heavenly crop of mutiny,
And so to reaping fell:
But in a little time they found,
It was the devil had till'd the ground,
And brought the seed from hell.
The pack divided, nothing throve:
Discord seized the throne of love.
Want and misery all endure.
All take pains, and all grow poor.
When they had toil'd the livelong day,
And came at night to view their prey,
Oft, alas! so ill they sped,
That half went supperless to bed.
At length, they all in council sate,
Where at a very fair debate,
It was agreed at last,
That slavery with ease and plenty,
When hounds were something turn'd of twenty
Was much a better fate,
Than 'twas to work and fast.

1 *Play.* Well, sir—and what did they do then?

Æsop. Why, they all went home to their kennel again. If you think they did wisely, you'll do well to follow their example. [*Exit.*

1 *Play.* Well, beagles, what think you of the little gentleman's advice?

2 *Wom.* I think he's a little ugly philosopher, and talks like a fool.

1 *Play.* Ah, why, there's it now! If he had been a tall, handsome blockhead, he had talked like a wise man.

2 *Wom.* Why, do you think, Mr. Jowler, that we'll ever join again?

1 *Play.* I do think, sweet Mrs. Juno, that if we do not join again, you must be a little freer of your carcass than you are, or you must bring down your pride to a serge petticoat.

1 *Wom.* And do you think, sir, after the affronts I have received, the patent and I can ever be friends?

1 *Play.* I do think, madam, that if my interest had not been more affronted than your face, the patent and you had never been foes.

1 *Wom.* And so, sir, then you have serious thoughts of a reconciliation?

1 *Play.* Madam, I do believe I may.

1 *Wom.* Why then, sir, give me leave to tell you, that—make it my interest, and I'll have serious thoughts on't too.

2 *Wom.* Nay, if you are thereabouts, I desire to come into the treaty.

3 *Play.* And I.

4 *Play.* And I.

2 *Play.* And I. No separate peace; none of your Turin play, I beseech you.

1 *Play.* Why then, since you are all so christianly disposed, I think we had best adjourn immediately to our council-chamber; choose some potent prince for mediator and guarantee; fix upon the place of treaty, despatch our plenipos, and whip up the peace like an oyster. For under the rose, my confederates, here is such a damned discount upon our bills, I'm afraid, if we stand it out another campaign, we must live upon slender subsistence. *Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter a Country Gentleman, *who walks to and fro, looking angrily upon* Æsop.

Æsop. Have you any business with me, sir?

Gent. I can't tell whether I have or not.

Æsop. You seem disturbed, sir.

Gent. I'm always so at the sight of a courtier.

Æsop. Pray what may it be that gives you so great an antipathy to 'em?

Gent. My profession.

Æsop. What's that?

Gent. Honesty.

Æsop. 'Tis an honest profession. I hope, sir, for the general good of mankind, you are in some public employment.

Gent. So I am, sir; no thanks to the court.

Æsop. You are then, I suppose, employed by—

Gent. My country.

Æsop. Who have made you—

Gent. A senator.

Æsop. Sir, I reverence you. [*Bowing.*

Gent. Sir, you may reverence as low as you please; but I shall spare none of you. Sir, I am entrusted by my country with above ten thousand of their grievances, and in order to redress 'em, my design is to hang ten thousand courtiers.

Æsop. Why, 'tis making short work, I must confess. But are you sure, sir, that would do't?

Gent. Sure!—ay, sure.

Æsop. How do you know?

Gent. Why, the whole country says so, and I at the head of 'em. Now let me see who dares say the contrary.

Æsop. Not I, truly. But, sir, if you won't take it ill, I'll ask you a question or two.

Gent. Sir, I shall take ill what I please; and if you, or e'er a courtier of you all, pretend the contrary, I say it's a breach of privilege. Now put your question, if you think fit.

Æsop. Why then, sir, with all due regard to your character, and your privilege too, I would be glad to know what you chiefly complain of?

Gent. Why, sir, I do chiefly complain, that we have—a great many ships, and very little trade; a great many tenants, and very little money; a great many soldiers, and very little fighting; a great many gazettes, and little good news; a great many statesmen, and very little wisdom; a great many parsons, and not an ounce of religion.

Æsop. Why truly, sir, I do confess these are grievances very well worth your redressing. I perceive you are truly sensible of our diseases, but I'm afraid you are a little out in the cure.

Gent. Sir, I perceive you take me for a country physician: but you shall find, sir, that a country doctor is able to deal with a court quack; and to show you that I do understand something of the state of the body politic, I will tell you, sir, that I have heard a wise man say, the court is the stomach of the nation, in which, if the business be not thoroughly digested, the whole carcass will be in disorder. Now, sir, I do find by the latitude of the members, and the vapours that fly into the head, that this same stomach is full of indigestions, which must be removed. And therefore, sir, I am come post to town with my head full of *crocus metallorum*, and design to give the court a vomit.

Æsop. Sir, the physic you mention, though necessary sometimes, is of too violent a nature to be used without a great deal of caution. I'm afraid you are a little too rash in your prescriptions. Is it not possible you may be mistaken in the cause of the distemper?

Gent. Sir, I do not think it possible I should be mistaken in anything.

Æsop. Have you been long a senator?

Gent. No, sir.

Æsop. Have you been much about town?

Gent. No, sir.

Æsop. Have you conversed much with men of business?

Gent. No, sir.

Æsop. Have you made any serious inquiry into the present disorders of the nation?

Gent. No, sir.

Æsop. Have you ever heard what the men now employed in business have to say for themselves?

Gent. No, sir.

Æsop. How then do you know they deserve to be punished for the present disorders in your affairs?

Gent. I'll tell you how I know.

Æsop. I would be glad to hear.

Gent. Why, I know by this—I know it, I say, by this—that I'm sure on't.—And to give you demonstration that I'm sure on't, there's not one man in a good post in the nation—but I'd give my vote to hang him. Now I hope you are convinced.

Æsop. As for example: the first minister of state, why would you hang him?

Gent. Because he gives bad counsel.

Æsop. How do you know?

Gent. Why they say so.

Æsop. And who would you put in his room?

Gent. One that would give better.

Æsop. Who's that?

Gent. Myself.

Æsop. The secretary of state, why would you hang him?

Gent. Because he has not good intelligence.

Æsop. How do you know?

Gent. I have heard so.

Æsop. And who would you put in his place?

Gent. My father.

Æsop. The treasurer, why would you hang him?

Gent. Because he does not understand his business.

Æsop. How do you know?

Gent. I dreamt so.

Æsop. And who would you have succeed him?

Gent. My uncle.

Æsop. The admiral, why would you hang him?

Gent. Because he has not destroyed the enemies.

Æsop. How do you know he could do it?

Gent. Why, I believe so.

Æsop. And who would you have command in his stead?

Gent. My brother.

Æsop. And the general, why would you hang him?

Gent. Because he took ne'er a town last campaign.

Æsop. And how do you know 'twas in his power?

Gent. Why I don't care a souse whether it was in his power or not. But I have a son at home, a brave chopping lad; he's been captain in the militia these twelve months, and I'd be glad to see him in his place. What do ye stare for, sir? ha! Egad I tell you he'd scour all to the devil. He's none of your fencers, none of your sa-sa men. Numphs is downright, that's his play. You may

see his courage in his face: he has a pair of cheeks like two bladders, a nose as flat as your hand, and a forehead like a bull.

Æsop. In short, sir, I find if you and your family were provided for, things would soon grow better than they do.

Gent. And so they would, sir. Clap me at the head of the state, and Numphs at the head of the army; he with his club-musket, and I with my club-headpiece, we'd soon put an end to your business.

Æsop. I believe you would indeed. And therefore since I happen to be acquainted with your extraordinary abilities, I am resolved to give the king an account of you, and employ my interest with him, that you and your son may have the posts you desire.

Gent. Will you, by the Lord?—Give me your fist, sir—the only honest courtier that ever I met with in my life.

Æsop. But, sir, when I have done you this mighty piece of service, I shall have a small request to beg of you, which I hope you won't refuse me.

Gent. What's that?

Æsop. Why 'tis in behalf of the two officers who are to be displaced to make room for you and your son.

Gent. The secretary and the general?

Æsop. The same. 'Tis pity they should be quite out of business; I must therefore desire you'll let me recommend one of 'em to you for your bailiff, and t'other for your huntsman.

Gent. My bailiff and my huntsman!—Sir, that's not to be granted.

Æsop. Pray, why?

Gent. Why!—because one would ruin my land, and t'other would spoil my fox-hounds.

Æsop. Why do you think so?

Gent. Why do I think so!—These courtiers will ask the strangest questions!—Why, sir, do you think that men bred up to the state and the army, can understand the business of ploughing and hunting?

Æsop. I did not know but they might.

Gent. How could you think so?

Æsop. Because I see men bred up to ploughing and hunting, understand the business of the state and the army.

Gent. I'm shot—I ha'nt one word to say for myself—I never was so caught in my life.

Æsop. I perceive, sir, by your looks what I have said has made some impression upon you; and would perhaps do more if you would give it leave.—[*Taking his hand.*] Come, sir, though I am a stranger to you, I can be your friend; my favour at court does not hinder me from being a lover of my country. 'Tis my nature as well as principles to be pleased with the prosperity of mankind. I wish all things happy, and my study is to make them so. The distempers of the government (which I own are great) have employed the stretch of my understanding, and the deepest of my thoughts, to penetrate the cause, and to find out the remedy. But, alas! all the product of my study is this:—that I find there is too near a resemblance between the diseases of the state and those of the body, for the most expert minister to become a greater master in one than the college is in t'other: and how far their skill extends you may see by this lump upon my back. Allowances in all professions there must be, since 'tis weak man that is the weak professor. Believe me, senator, for I have seen the proof on't; the longest beard amongst us is a fool. Could you but stand behind the curtain, and there observe the secret springs of state, you'd see in all the good or evil that attends it, ten ounces of chance for one grain either of wisdom or roguery.

You'd see, perhaps, a venerable statesman
Sit fast asleep in a great downy chair;
Whilst in that soft vacation of his thought,
Blind chance (or what at least we blindly call so)
Shall so dispose a thousand secret wheels,
That when he wakes he needs but write his name,
To publish to the world some bless'd event,
For which his statue shall be raised in brass.
Perhaps a moment thence you shall behold him
Torturing his brain; his thoughts all stretch'd upon
The rack for public service: the livelong night,
When all the world's at rest,
Consumed in care, and watching for their safety,
When by a whirlwind in his fate,
In spite of him some mischief shall befal 'em,
For which a furious sentence straight shall pass,
And they shall vote him to the scaffold.
Even thus uncertain are rewards and punishments;
And even thus little do the people know
When 'tis the statesman merits one or t'other.

Gent. Now I do believe I am beginning to be a wise man; for I never till now perceived I was a fool. But do you then really believe, sir, our men in business do the best they can?

Æsop. Many of 'em do: some perhaps do not. But this you may depend upon; he that is out of business is the worst judge in the world of him that is in: first, because he seldom knows anything of the matter: and, secondly, because he always desires to get his place.

Gent. And so, sir you turn the tables upon the plantiff, and lay the fool and knave at his door.

Æsop. If I do him wrong, I'm sorry for't. Let him examine himself, he'll find whether I do or not. [*Exit.*

Gent. Examine!—I think I have had enough of that already. There's nothing left, that I know of, but to give sentence: and truly I think there's no great difficulty in that. A very pretty fellow I am indeed! Here am I come bellowing and roaring two hundred miles post to find myself an ass; when with one quarter of an hour's consideration I might have made the self-same discovery, without going over my threshold. Well! if ever they send me on their errand to reform the state again, I'll be damned. But this I'll do: I'll go home and reform my family if I can: them I'm sure I know. There's my father's a peevish old coxcomb: there's my uncle's a drunken old sot: there's my brother's a cowardly bully: son Numphs is a lubberly whelp: I've a great ramping daughter, that stares like a heifer; and a wife's that's a slatternly sow. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Enter a young, gay, airy Beau, *who stands smiling contemptibly upon* Æsop.

Æsop. Well, sir, what are you?

Beau. A fool.

Æsop. That's impossible;—for if thou wer't thou'dst think thyself a wise man.

Beau. So I do.—This is my own opinion—the t'other's my neighbours'. [*Walking airily about.*

Æsop. [*Gazing after him.*] Have you any business with me, sir?

Beau. Sir, I have business with nobody; pleasure's my study.

Æsop. [*Aside.*] An odd fellow this!—[*Aloud.*] Pray, sir, who are you?

Beau. I can't tell.

Æsop. Do you know who I am?

Beau. No, sir: I'm a favourite at court, and I neither know myself nor anybody else.

Æsop. Are you in any employment?

Beau. Yes.

Æsop. What is't?

Beau. I don't know the name on't.

Æsop. You know the business on't, I hope?

Beau. That I do—the business of it is—to—put in a deputy, and receive the money.

Æsop. Pray what may be your name?

Beau. Empty.

Æsop. Where do you live?

Beau. In the side-box.

Æsop. What do you do there?

Beau. I ogle the ladies.

Æsop. To what purpose?

Beau. To no purpose.

Æsop. Why then do you do it?

Beau. Because they like it, and I like it.

Æsop. Wherein consists the pleasure?

Beau. In playing the fool.

Æsop. Pray sir, what age are you?

Beau. Five-and-twenty, my body; my head's about fifteen.

Æsop. Is your father living?

Beau. Dead, thank God.

Æsop. Has he been long so?

Beau. Positively yes.

Æsop. Where were you brought up?

Beau. At school.

Æsop. What school?

Beau. The school of Venus.

Æsop. Were you ever at the university?

Beau. Yes.

Æsop. What study did you follow there?

Beau. My bedmaker.

Æsop. How long did you stay?

Beau. Till I had lost my maidenhead.

Æsop. Why did you come away?

Beau. Because I was expelled.

Æsop. Where did you go then?

Beau. To court.

Æsop. Who took care of your education there?

Beau. A whore and a dancing-master.

Æsop. What did you gain by them?

Beau. A minuet and the pox.

Æsop. Have you an estate?

Beau. I had.

Æsop. What's become on't?

Beau. Spent.

Æsop. In what?

Beau. In a twelvemonth.

Æsop. But how?

Beau. Why, in dressing, drinking, whoring, claps, dice, and scriveners. What do you think of me now, old gentleman?

Æsop. Pray what do you think of yourself?

Beau. I don't think at all: I know how to bestow my time better.

Æsop. Are you married?

Beau. No—have you ever a daughter to bestow upon me?

Æsop. She would be well bestowed!

Beau. Why, I'm a strong young dog, you old put, you: she may be worse coupled.

Æsop. Have you then a mind to a wife, sir?

Beau. Yaw, min Heer.

Æsop. What would you do with her?

Beau. Why, I'd take care of her affairs, rid her of all her troubles, her maidenhead, and her portion.

Æsop. And pray what sort of wife would you be willing to throw yourself away upon?

Beau. Why, upon one that has youth, beauty, quality, virtue, wit, and money.

Æsop. And how may you be qualified yourself, to back you in your pretensions to such a one?

Beau. Why, I am qualified with—a periwig—a snuffbox—a feather—a—smooth face—a fool's head—and a patch.

Æsop. But one question more: what settlements can you make?

Beau. Settlements!—why, if she be a very great heiress indeed, I believe I may settle—myself upon her for life, and my pox upon her children for ever.

Æsop. 'Tis enough; you may expect I'll serve you, if it lies in my way. But I would not have you rely too much upon your success, because people sometimes are mistaken; as for example—

An ape there was of nimble parts,
A great intruder into hearts,
As brisk, and gay, and full of air,
As you, or I, or any here;
Rich in his dress, of splendid show,
And with a head like any beau:
Eternal mirth was in his face;
Where'er he went,
He was content,
So Fortune had but kindly sent
Some ladies—and a looking-glass.
Encouragement they always gave him,
Encouragement to play the fool;
For soon they found it was a tool,
Would hardly be so much in love,
But that the mumbling of a glove,
Or tearing of a fan, would save him.
These bounties he accepts as proof
Of feats done by his wit and youth;
He gives their freedom gone for ever,
Concludes each female heart undone,
Except that very happy one,
To which he'd please to do the favour.
In short, so smooth his matters went,
He guess'd, where'er his thoughts were bent,
The lady he must carry.
So put on a fine new cravat,
He comb'd his wig, he cock'd his hat,
And gave it out he'd marry.
But here, alas! he found to's cost,
He had reckon'd long without his host:
For wheresoe'er he made the attack,
Poor pug with shame was beaten back.
The first fair she he had in chace,
Was a young cat, extremely rich,
Her mother was a noted witch;
So had the daughter proved but civil,
He had been related to the devil.

But when he came
To urge his flame,
She scratch'd him o'er the face.
With that he went among the bitches,
Such as had beauty, wit, and riches,
And swore Miss Maulken, to her cost,
Should quickly see what she had lost:
But the poor unlucky swain
Miss'd his shepherdess again;
His fate was to miscarry.
It was his destiny to find,
That cats and dogs are of a mind,
When monkeys come to marry.

Beau. 'Tis very well;—'tis very well, old spark; I say 'tis very well. Because I han't a pair of plod shoes and a dirty shirt, you think a woman won't venture upon me for a husband. Why now to show you, old father, how little you philosophers know of the ladies—I'll tell you an adventure of a friend of mine.

A band, a bob-wig, and a feather,
Attack'd a lady's heart together;
The band in a most learned plea,
Made up of deep philosophy,
Told her, if she would please to wed
A reverend beard, and take instead
Of vigorous youth,
Old solemn truth,
With books and morals into bed,
How happy she would be.
The Bob he talk'd of management,
What wondrous blessings heaven sent
On care, and pains, and industry;
And truly he must be so free,
To own he thought your airy beaux,
With powder'd wigs and dancing shoes,
Were good for nothing (mend his soul!)
But prate, and talk, and play the fool.
He said 'twas wealth gave joy and mirth,
And that to be the dearest wife
Of one who labour'd all his life,
To make a mine of gold his own,
And not spend sixpence when he'd done,
Was heaven upon earth.
When these two blades had done, d'ye see,
The feather (as it might be me)
Steps out, sir, from behind the screen,
With such an air, and such a mien,
Look you, old gentleman, in short,
He quickly spoil'd the statesman's sport.
It proved such sunshine weather,
That you must know, at the first beck
The lady leap'd about his neck,
And off they went together.

There's a tale for your tale, old dad, and so—serviteur! [*Exit.*

THE FALSE FRIEND.

A Comedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON FELIX DE CABRERA, *a Gentleman of Valencia.*
DON PEDRO OSORIO, } *Lovers of* LEONORA.
DON GUZMAN DE TORRELLAS, } *Lovers of* LEONORA.
DON JOHN DE ALVARADA, } *Lovers of* LEONORA.
LOPEZ, *Servant to* DON JOHN.
GALINDO, *Servant to* DON GUZMAN.

LEONORA, *Daughter to* DON FELIX.
ISABELLA, *her Friend, and Sister to* GUZMAN.
JACINTA, *Maid to* LEONORA.

SCENE,—VALENCIA.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY CAPT. GRIFFIN.

You dread reformers of an impious age,
You awful cat-a-nine tails to the stage,
This once be just, and in our cause engage.
To gain your favour, we your rules obey,
And treat you with a moral piece to-day;
So moral, we're afraid 'twill damn the play.
For though ye have long been leagued (as people tell)
To reduce the power exorbitant of hell;
No troops you send, to abate it in this field,
But leave us still exposed, to starve or yield.
Your scouts indeed sometimes come stealing in,
To observe this formidable camp of sin,
And whisper, if we'll piously declare,
What aids you then will send to help us through the war.
To this we answer, We're a feeble state,
And cannot well afford to love or hate,
So should not meddle much in your debate.
But since your cause is good, thus far we'll go,
When Portugal declares, we'll do so too.
Our cases, as we think, are much alike,
And on the same conditions we should strike;
Send to their aid a hundred men-of-war,
To ours a hundred squadrons of the fair;
Rig out your wives and daughters all around,
(I mean whō are fit for service, tight and sound)
And for a proof our meaning is sincere,
See but the ships are good, and if you fear
A want of equipage, we'll man them here.
These are the terms, on which you may engage
The poet's fire, to batter from the stage.
Useful ally! whose friendship lets you in
Upon the weak and naked side of sin;
Against your old attack, the foe's prepared,
Well fortified, and always on his guard:
The sacred shot you send are flung in vain;
By impious hands, with insolent disdain,
They're gather'd up, and fired at you again.
Through baffled toils, and unsuccessful cares,
In slaughter, blood, and wounds, and pious snares,
Ye have made a Flanders war these fifteen hundred years.
Change then your scheme, if you'd your foe annoy,
And the infernal Bajazet destroy:
Our aid accept,
We have gentler stratagems which may succeed;
We'll tickle 'em, where you would make 'em bleed:
In sounds less harsh we'll teach 'em to obey;
In softer strains the evil spirit lay,
And steal their immorality away.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—DON JOHN'S *Lodgings.*

Enter DON JOHN *beating* LOPEZ.

Lop. Hold, sir, hold; there's enough in all conscience; I'm reasonable, I ask no more; I'm content.

Don John. Then there's double content, you dog, and a brace of contents more into the bargain. Now is't well? [*Striking again and again.*

Lop. O mighty well, sir, you'll never mend it; pray leave it as 'tis.

Don John. Look you, you jackanapes, if ever I hear an offer at your impertinent advice again—

Lop. And why, sir, will you stifle the most useful of my qualifications?

Don John. Either, sirrah, I pass for a very great blockhead with you, or you are pleased to reckon much upon my patience.

Lop. Your patience, sir, indeed is great; I feel at this time forty proofs on't upon my shoulders. But really, sir, I would advise you to—

Don John. Again! I can bear thee no longer. Here, pen and ink, I'll give thee thy discharge. Did I take you for a valet, or a privy-counsellor, sir?

Lop. 'Tis confessed, sir, you took me but for humble employment; but my intention was agreeably to surprise you with some superior gifts of nature, to your faithful slave. I profess, my noble master, a most perfect knowledge of men and manners. Yours, gracious sir, (with all respect I speak it) are not irreprehensible. And I'm afraid in time, sir, I am indeed, they'll wriggle you into some ill-favoured affair, whence with all my understanding I shall be puzzled to bring you off.

Don John. Very well, sir.

Lop. And therefore, sir, it is, that I (poor Lopez as I am) sometimes take leave to moralise.

Don John. Go, go, moralise in the market-place; I'm quite worn out. Once more, march.

Lop. Is the sentence definitive?

Don John. Positive.

Lop. Then pray let us come to account, and see what wages are due.

Don John. Wages! Refund what you have had, you rascal you, for the plague you have given me.

Lop. Nay, if I must lose my money, then let me claim another right: losers have leave to speak. Therefore advance, my tongue, and say thy pleasure; tell this master of mine, he should die with shame at the life he leads: so much unworthy of a man of honour. Tell him—

Don John. I'll hear no more.

Lop. You shall indeed, sir.

Don John. Here, take thy money and begone.

Lop. Counters all; adieu you glistering spangles of the world! farewell ye tempters of the great; not me! Tell him—

Don John. Stay.

Lop. Go on.—Tell him he's worse among the women than a ferret among the rabbits; at one and all, from the princess to the tripe-woman; handsome, ugly, old women and children, all go down.

Don John. Very well.

Lop. It is indeed, sir, and so are the stories you tell them to bring them to your matters. The handsome, she's all divinity to be sure; the ugly, she's so agreeable, were it not for her virtue, she'd be overrun with lovers; the light airy flipflap, she kills him with her motions; the dull heavy-tailed maukin melts him down with her modesty; the scragged lean pale face has a shape for destruction; the fat overgrown sow has an air of importance; the tall awkward trapes with her majesty wounds; the little short trundle-tail shoots a *je-ne-sais-quoi:* in a word, they have all something for him—and he has something for 'em all.

Don John. And thus, you fool, by a general attack, I keep my heart my own; lie with them that like me, and care not sixpence for them that don't.

Lop. Well said, well said, a very pretty amusement truly! But pray, sir, by your leave (ceremony aside) since you are pleased to clear up into conversation, what mighty matters do you expect from boarding a woman you know is already heart and soul engaged to another?

Don John. Why I expect her heart and soul should disengage in a week. If you live a little longer with me, sirrah, you'll know how to instruct your next master to the purpose: and therefore that I may charitably equip you for a new service, now I'm turning you out of my own, I'll let you know, that when a woman loves a man best, she's in the most hopeful way of betraying him; for love, like fortune, turns upon a wheel, and is very much given to rising and falling.

Lop. Like enough. But as much upon the weathercock as the ladies are, there are some the wind must blow hard to fetch them about. When such a sturdy hussy falls in your honour's way, what account may things turn to then, an't please ye?

Don John. They turn to a bottle, you puppy.

Lop. I find they'll always turn to something; but when you pursue a poor woman only to make her lover jealous, what pleasure can you take in that?

Don John. That pleasure.

Lop. Look you there again!

Don John. Why, sirrah, d'you think there's no pleasure in spoiling their sport, when I can't make my own?

Lop. Oh! to a good-natured man, be sure there must; but suppose, instead of fending and proving with his mistress, he should come to—a—parrying and thrusting with you; what becomes of your joy then, my noble master?

Don John. Why do you think I'm afraid to fight, you rascal?

Lop. I thought we were talking of what we loved, not what we feared, sir.

Don John. Sir, I love everything that leads to what I love most.

Lop. I know, sir, you have often fought upon these occasions.

Don John. Therefore that has been no stop to my pleasures.

Lop. But you have never been killed once, sir; and when that happens, you will for ever lose the pleasure of—

Don John. [*Striking him.*] Breaking your head, you rascal, which will afflict me heartily.—[*Knocking at the door.*] See who knocks so hard.

Lop. Somebody that thinks I can hear no better than you think I can feel.

Enter DON GUZMAN.

Don Guz. Don John de Alvarada, is he here?

Lop. There's the man.—[*Aside.*] Show me such another if you can find him.

Don Guz. Don John, I desire to speak with you alone.

Don John. You may speak before this fellow, sir; he's trusty.

Don Guz. 'Tis an affair of honour, sir.

Don John. Withdraw, Lopez.

Lop. [*Aside.*] Behind the door I will, and no farther. This fellow looks as if he came to save me a broken head. [*Retires.*

Don Guz. I call myself Don Guzman de Torrellas, you know what blood I spring from; I am a cadet, and by consequence not rich; but I am esteemed by men of honour: I have been forward to expose myself in battles abroad, and I have met with applause in our feasts at home.

Lop. So much by way of introduction. [*Aside.*

Don John. I understand your merit, sir, and should be glad to do as much by your business.

Don Gus. Give attention, and you'll be instructed. I love Leonora, and from my youth have done so. Long she rejected my sighs, and despised my tears, but my constancy at last has vanquished. I have found the way to her heart, and nothing is wanting to complete my joy but the consent of her father, whom I cannot yet convince that the wants in my fortune are recompensed by the merits of my person.

Lop. He's a very dull fellow indeed. [*Aside.*

Don Gus. In the meanwhile the object of my vows is a sharer in my grief, and the only cordial we have is the pleasure of a secret conversation, through a small breach I have made in a thin partition that divides our lodgings. I trust you, Don John, with this important secret; friend or enemy, you are noble, therefore keep it, I charge your honour with it.

Lop. You could not put it in better hands. [*Aside.*

Don Gus. But more, my passion for this lady is not hid; all Valencia is acquainted with my wishes, and approves my choice. You alone, John de Alvarada, seeming ignorant of my vows, dare traverse my amour.

Don John. Go on.

Lop. These words import war; lie close, Lopez. [*Aside.*

Don Gus. You are the Argus of our street, and the spy of Leonora; whether Diana, by her borrowed light, supplies the absence of the Astrea of day, or that the shades of night cover the earth with impenetrable darkness; you still attend till Aurora's return, under the balcony of that adorable beauty.

Don John. So.

Don Gus. Wherever she moves, you still follow as her shadow, at church, at plays; be her business with heaven or earth, your importunity is such, you'll share it.

Lop. He is a forward fellow, that's the truth on't. [*Aside.*

Don Gus. But what's still farther, you take the liberty to copy me; my words, my actions, every motion is no sooner mine, but yours. In short, you ape me, Don; and to that point, I once designed to stab myself, and try if you would follow me in that too.

Lop. No, there the monkey would have left you. [*Aside.*

Don Gus. But to conclude.

Don John. 'Tis time.

Don Gus. My patience, Don, is now no more; and I pronounce, that if henceforth I find you under Leonora's window, who never wished, fond man, to see you there, I by the ways of honour shall fix you in another station. I leave you to consider on't. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Don John. Hold, sir, we had e'en as good do this honourable deed now.

Re-enter LOPEZ.

Lop. No, pray, sir, let him go, and may be you mayn't have occasion to do it at all.

Don John. I thought at first the coxcomb came upon another subject, which would have embarrassed me much more.

Lop. Now this was a subject would have embarrassed me enough in all conscience.

Don John. I was afraid he came to forbid me seeing his sister Isabella, with whom I'm upon very good terms.

Lop. Why now that's a hard case, when you have got a man's sister, you can't leave him his mistress.

Don John. No, changeling, I hate him enough, to love every woman that belongs to him: and the fool has so provoked me by his threatening, that I believe I shall have a stroke at his mother before I think myself even with him.

Lop. A most admirable way to make up accounts truly!

Don John. A son of a whore! 'sdeath, I did not care sixpence for the slut before, but now I'll have her maidenhead in a week, for fear the rogue should marry her in ten days.

Lop. Mum; here's her father: I'll warrant this old spark comes to correct our way of living too.

Enter DON FELIX.

Don Fel. Don John

Don John. Don Felix, do I see you in my poor dwelling? Pray, to what lucky accident do I owe this honour?

Don Fel. That I may speak to you without constraint, pray send away your servant.

Lop. [*Aside.*] What the pox have I done to them, they are all so uneasy at my company!

Don John. Give us chairs, and leave the room.

Lop. [*Aside.*] If this old fellow comes to quarrel with us too, he'll at least do us less harm.

Don Fel. Won't you retire, friend? [*Looking behind.*

Don John. Begone, sirrah!

Lop. [*Aside.*] Pox take ye, you old prig you! But I shall be even with you! [*Hides himself.*

Don Fel. You know me, sir?

Don John. I do, sir.

Don Fel. That I call myself—

Don John. Don Felix.

Don Fel. That I am of the house of—

Don John. Cabrera, one of the first of Valencia.

Don Fel. That my estate is—

Don John. Great.

Don Fel. You know that I have some reputation in the world.

Don John. I know your reputation equals your birth.

Don Fel. And you are not ignorant, that heaven for the consolation of my grey hairs has given me an only daughter, who is not deformed.

Don John. Beauteous as light.

Don Fel. Well shaped, witty, and endowed with—

Don John. All the good qualities of mind and body.

Don Fel. Since you are satisfied with all this, hearken, I pray, with attention, to the business that brings me hither.

Don John. I shall.

Don Fel. We all know, Don John, some by their own experience, some by that of others, how nice a gentleman's honour is, and how easily tarnished; an éclaircissement managed with prudence, often prevents misfortunes that perhaps might be upon the point of attending us. I have thought it my duty to acquaint you, that I have seen your designs upon my daughter. You pass nights entire under her window, as if you were searching an oppor-

tunity to get into my house; there is nobody in the town but has taken notice of your proceedings; you give the public a subject for disadvantageous discourse; and though in reality Leonora's virtue receives no prejudice by it, her reputation daily runs some risk. My years have taught me to judge right of things: and yet I have not been able to decide what your end can be; you can't regard my daughter on a foot of gallantry, you know her virtue and my birth too well; and for a wife you seem to have no thought, since you have yet made no demand to me: what then is your intention? You have heard perhaps, I have hearkened to a gentleman of Toledo, a man of merit. I own I have, and I expect him daily here; but, Don John, if 'tis that which hinders you from declaring in form, I'll ease you of a great deal of trouble, which the customs of the world impose upon these occasions, and in a word, I'll break with him, and give you Leonora.

Lop. [*Aside.*] Good.

Don Fel. You don't answer me! what is't that troubles you?

Don John. That I have been such a sot, old gentleman, to hear you with so much patience. [*Rising.*

Don Fel. How, Don! I'm more astonished at your answer than I was with your silence.

Don John. Astonished! why han't you talked to me of marriage? He asks me to marry, and wonders what I complain of!

Don Fel. 'Tis well—'tis well, Don John, the outrage is violent! You insult me in your own house. But know, sir— [*Rising.*

Don John. But know, sir, there needs no quarrel, if you please, sir; I like your daughter very well; but for marrying her—serviteur.

Don Fel. Don Guzman de Torrellas has not less merit than you, Don.

Don John. Agreed; what then?

Don Fel. And yet I have refused him my daughter.

Don John. Why then you have used him better than you have done me, which I take very unkindly.

Don Fel. I have used you, sir—

Don John. Used me, sir! you have used me very ill, to come into my own house to seduce me.

Don Fel. What extravagance!

Don John. What persecution!

Don Fel. Am I then to have no other answer?

Don John. Methinks you have enough in all conscience.

Don Fel. Promise me at least you'll cease to love my daughter.

Don John. I won't affront your family so far neither.

Lop. Egad my master shines to-day. [*Aside.*

Don Fel. Know, Don, that I can bear no more.

Lop. If he could, I think there's no more to lay upon him. [*Aside.*

Don Fel. If I find you continue to importune Leonora, I shall find a way to satisfy my offended honour, and punish your presumption.

Don John. You shall do what you please to me provided you don't marry me.

Don Fel. Know, Alvarada, there are ways to revenge such outrageous affronts as these.

Don John. I won't marry.

Don Fel. 'Tis enough. [*Exit.*

Lop. [*Aside.*] So; the old fellow's gone at last, and has carried great content along with him.

Don John. Lopez.

Re-enter LOPEZ.

Lop. Sir—

Don John. What dost think? he would have married me!

Lop. Yes, he had found his man. But you have been even with him.

Don John. What, thou hast heard us then?

Lop. Or I were no valet. But pray what does your honour intend to do now? Will you continue the siege of a place, where 'tis probable they will daily augment the fortifications, when there are so many open towns you may march into without the trouble of opening the trenches?

Don John. I am going, Lopez, to double my attacks: I'll beat up her quarters six times a-night, I am now downright in love; the difficulties pique me to the attempt, and I'll conquer or I'll die.

Lop. Why to confess the truth, sir, I find you much upon my taste in this matter; difficulties are the rocambole of love, I never valued an easy conquest in my life. To rouse my fire, the lady must cry out (as softly as ever she can) Have a care my dear, my mother has seen us; my brothers suspect me; my husband may surprise us: oh, dear heart, have a care, I pray! Then I play the devil: but when I come to a fair-one, where I may hang up my cloak upon a peg, get into my gown and slippers—

Don John. Impudent rogue! [*Aside.*

Lop. See her stretched upon the couch in great security, with—My dear, come kiss me, we have nothing to fear; I droop, I yawn, I sleep.

Don John. Well, sir, whatever you do with your fair-one, I am going to be very busy with mine; I was e'en almost weary of her, but Guzman and this old fellow have revived my dying fire; and so have at her.

Lop. 'Tis all mighty well, sir, mighty well, sir, as can be in the world. But if you would have the goodness to consider *en passant*, or so, a little now and then, about swords and daggers, and rivals and old fellows, and pistols and great guns, and such-like baubles, only now and then at leisure, sir, not to interrupt things of more consequence.

Don John. Thou art a cowardly rascal, I have often considered that.

Lop. Ay, that's true, sir, and yet a blunderbuss is presently discharged out of a garret window.

Don John. Come, no more words; but follow me.—How now! what impertinence have we here now to stop me?

Enter DON PEDRO.

Lop. 'Tis Don Pedro, or I'm a dog.

Don John. Impossible! Don Pedro returned!

Don Ped. 'Tis I, my dearest friend; I'm come to forget all the miseries of a long absence, in one happy embrace. [*They embrace.*

Don John. I'm overjoyed to see you.

Don Ped. Mine's not to be expressed.—What, friend Lopez here still! how dost do, Lopez? What, dost not know me?

Lop. As well as my father's seal, sir, when he sends me a bill of exchange.

Don Ped. Just as he was, I find galliard still.

Lop. I find it very unwholesome to be otherwise, sir.

Don John. You have then quitted the service in Flanders, I suppose.

Don Ped. I have so, friend; I have left the ensigns of Mars, and am listing myself in a softer militia.

Don John. Explain, pray.

Don Ped. Why, when your father's death obliged you to leave Brussels, and return hither to the plentiful fortune he left you, I stayed in Flanders, very triste for your loss, and passed three years in the trade of war. About two months since, my father writ to me from Toledo, that he was going to marry me very advantageously at Valencia. He sent me the picture of the lady, and I was so well pleased with it, that I immediately got my congé, and embarked at Dunkirk; I had a quick passage to the Groyne, from whence, by the way of Madrid, I am come hither with all the speed I could. I have, you must know, been two days in town, but I have lain *incognito*, that I might inform myself of the lady's conduct I'm to marry; and I have discovered that she's served by two cavaliers of birth and merit. But though they have both given many proofs of a most violent passion, I have found for the quiet of my honour that this virtuous lady, out of modesty or prudence, has shown a perfect indifference to them and their gallantries; her fortune is considerable, her birth is high, her manners irreproachable, and her beauty so great, that nothing but my love can equal it.

Don John. I have hearkened to you, Don Pedro, with a great deal of attention, and Heaven's my witness I have a mighty joy in seeing you; but the devil fetch me, it makes my heart bleed to hear you are going to be married.

Don Ped. Say no more of that, I desire you, we have always been friends, and I earnestly beg we ever may be so; but I am not come to ask counsel about my marriage, my party is taken, and my inquiries have so much heightened my desire, that nothing can henceforth abate it. I must therefore expect from you, dear friend, that you won't oppose it, but that you'll aid me in hastening the moment of my happiness.

Don John. Since 'tis so impossible for you to resolve for your own good, I must submit to what you'll have me. But are not we to know the name of this piece of rarity, that is to do you this good turn?

Don Ped. You'll know it presently; for I'm going to carry you to her house.

Don John. You shall tell me at least who are her two gallants.

Don Ped. One, they could not tell me his name; t'other is—But before we talk any more of these affairs, can you let me dispose of Lopez till the return of a servant I sent three days ago to—

Don John. Carry news of you to papa, I suppose.

Don Ped. You are right; the good man is thirty leagues off, and I have not seen him this six years.

Don John. Lopez, do you wait upon Don Pedro.

Lop. With all my heart.—[*Aside.*] It's at least a suspension of boxes o' th' ear, and kicks o' the backside.

Don Ped. Then, honest Lopez, with your master's leave, go to the new inn, the King of France on horseback, and see if my servant's returned; I'll be there immediately, to charge thee with a commission of more importance.

Lop. I shall perform your orders, sir, both to your satisfaction and my own reputation. [*Exit.*

Don John. Very quaint.—Well, old acquaintance, we are going to be married then? 'Tis resolved: ha!

Don Ped. So says my star.

Don John. The foolishest star that has said anything a great while.

Don Ped. Still the same, I see! or, more than ever, resolved to love nothing.

Don John. Love nothing! why, I'm in love at this very time.

Don Ped. With what?

Don John. A woman.

Don Ped. Impossible!

Don John. True.

Don Ped. And how came you in love with her?

Don John. Why I was ordered not to be in love with her.

Don Ped. Then there's more humour than love in't.

Don John. There shall be what you please in't: but I shan't quit the gentlewoman till I have convinced her there's something in't.

Don Ped. Mayn't I know her name?

Don John. When you have let me into your conjugal affection.

Don Ped. Pray stay here but till I have sent Lopez to my father-in-law: I'll come back and carry you with me in a moment.

Don John. I'll expect you.

Don Ped. Adieu, dear friend; may I in earnest see you quickly in love.

Don John. May I, without a jest, see you quickly a widower.—[*Exit* Don Pedro.] He comes, he says, to marry a woman of quality that has two lovers.—If it should be Leonora?—But why she? There are many, I hope, in that condition in Valencia.—I'm a little embarrassed about it, however.—

Friendship, take heed; if woman interfere,
Be sure the hour of thy destruction's near.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Leonora's *Apartment.*

Enter Leonora, Isabella, *and* Jacinta.

Leo. Dear Isabella, come in. How I am plagued with this troublesome wretch!—Jacinta, have you shut the outward gates?

Jac. I have, madam.

Leo. Shut the window too; we shall have him get in there by and by.

Isab. What's this you are in such apprehensions of, pray?

Leo. Nothing worth naming.

Isab. You dissemble: something of love in the case, I'll warrant you.

Leo. The reverse on't; 'tis aversion. My impertinent star has furnished me with a lover for my guard, who is never from my window; he persecutes me to distraction; I affront him fifty times a-day, which he receives with a bow down to the ground: in short, all I can do is doing nothing at all: he still persists in loving me, as much as I hate him.

Isab. Have a care he don't get the better on't, for all that; for when a man loves a woman well enough to persevere, 'tis odds but she at last loves him well enough to make him give it over. But I think I had as good take off my scarf; for since my brother Don Guzman knows I'm with you, he won't quarrel at my return for the length of my visit.

Leo. If he should, I should quarrel with him, which few things else would make me do. But methinks, Isabella, you are a little melancholy.

Isab. And you a little thoughtful.

Leo. Pray tell me your affliction.

Isab. Pray don't conceal yours.

Leo. Why truly, my heart is not at ease.

Isab. Mine, I fear, never will.

Leo. My father's marrying me against my inclination.

Isab. My brother is hindering me from marrying with mine.

Leo. You know I love your brother, Don Guzman.

Isab. And you shall know, I'm uneasy for Don John de Alvarada.

Leo. Don John!

Isab. The same.

Leo. Have you any reason to hope for a return?

Isab. I think so.

Leo. I'm afraid, my dear, you abuse yourself.

Isab. Why?

Leo. Because he is already in love with—

Isab. Who?

Leo. Me.

Isab. I would not have you too positive in that, madam, for I am very sure that—

Leo. Madam, I am very sure that he's the troublesome guest I just now complained of: and you may believe—

Isab. Madam, I can never believe he's troublesome to anybody.

Leo. O dear madam! But I'm sure I'm forced to keep my windows shut till I'm almost dead with heat, and that I think is troublesome.

Isab. This mistake is easily set right, Leonora. Our houses join, and when he looks at my window, you fancy 'tis at yours.

Leo. But when he attacks my door, madam, and almost breaks it down, I don't know how in the world to fancy 'tis yours.

Isab. A man may do that to disguise his real inclination.

Leo. Nay, if you please, believe he's dying for you. I wish he were; then I should be troubled no more with him.—Be sure, Jacinta, you don't open a window to-night.

Isab. Not while I'm here at least; for if he knows that, he may chance to press in.

Leo. Look you, Isabella, 'tis entirely alike to me who he's fond of; but I'm so much your friend, I can't endure to see you deceived.

Isab. And since I have the same kindness for you, Leonora, know in short, that my brother is so alarmed at his passion for me, that he has forbid him the street.

Leo. Bless my soul! and don't you plainly see by that he's jealous of him upon my account?

Isab. [*Smiling.*] He's jealous of his honour, madam, lest he should debauch his sister.

Leo. I say, he's jealous of his love, lest he should corrupt his mistress.

Isab. But why all this heat? If you love my brother, why are you concerned Don John should love me?

Leo. I'm not concerned; I have no designs upon him, I care not who he loves.

Isab. Why then are you angry?

Leo. Why do you say he does not care for me?

Isab. Well, to content you then, I know nothing certain but that I love him.

Leo. And to content you, I know nothing so certain, as that I neither love him, nor never can love him. And so I hope we are friends again.

Isab. Kiss me then, and let us never be otherwise.

Leo. Agreed.—[*They kiss.*] And now my dear, as my misfortune's nearest, I am first to be pitied. I am the most wretched woman living. My father every moment expects a gentleman from Flanders, to whom he has resolved to marry me. But neither duty, nor prudence, nor danger, nor resolution, nor all I can summon to my aid, can drive your brother from my heart; but there he's fixed to ruin me.

Jac. Madam, here's Don Guzman at the chamber-door; he begs so passionately to come in, sure you can't refuse him.

Leo. Heavens! but does he consider to what he exposes me?

Jac. Madam, he considers nothing; if he did, I'd say he were an impudent fellow to pretend to be in love with you.

Leo. Shall I venture, Isabella?

Isab. You know best.

Enter Don Guzman.

Jac. Marry, methinks he knows best of us all, for here he comes.

Don Guz. Forgive me, lovely Leonora; 'tis the last time perhaps that I may beg your pity. My

rival is not far; excess of modesty is now our ruin. Break through it, for this moment you have left, and own to your old father how you love. He once did so himself; our scene of sorrow may perhaps recal some small remembrance of his tender years, and melt him into mercy.

Leo. Alas! Don Guzman!

Jac. O heavens! madam—

Leo. What's the matter?

Jac. Y'are undone, here's your father.

Isab. What an unlucky accident!

Leo. Has he seen Don Guzman?

Jac. Nay, the deuse knows.

Isab. Where shall he hide himself?

Jac. In the moon, if he can get thither.

Enter Don Felix.

Don Guz. I must e'en stand it now.

Don Fel. Good news, my daughter, good news; I come to acquaint you, that—How now? what's the meaning of this? Don Guzman in my daughter's chamber!

Don Guz. I see your surprise, sir, but you need not be disturbed; 'twas some sudden business with my sister brought me here.

Don Fel. 'Tis enough, sir: I'm glad to find you here; you shall be a witness that I know how to preserve the honour of my family.

Don Guz. What mean you, sir?

Don Fel. To marry Leonora this moment.

Don Guz. How say you?

Don Fel. I say you shall have nothing left to ask of me.

Don Guz. Is't possible? O Heavens! what joy I feel.

Don Fel. Leonora, prepare your hand and heart.

Leo. They both are ready, sir; and in giving me the man I love, you charge me with a debt of gratitude can never be repaid.

Don Guz. [*Kneeling.*] Upon my knees, I thank the best of men, for blessing me with all that's blest in woman.

Isab. How well that kind, that gentle look becomes him!

Jac. Now methinks he looks like an old rogue; I don't like his looks. [*Aside.*

Enter Lopez.

Lop. To all whom it may concern, greeting. Don Pedro Osorio acknowledging himself most unworthy of the honour intended him, in the person of the fair Leonora, addresses himself (by me his small ambassador) to the generosity of Don Felix, for leave to walk in and take possession.

Don Fel. I had already given order for his entrance.

Don Guz. What is't I hear!

Leo. Support me!

Isab. She faints.

Don Guz. Look, tyrant, here, and if thou canst be cruel! [*Holding her.*

Don Fel. Bring in Don Pedro. [*Exit* Lopez.

Don Guz. Barbarian!

Jac. Look up, madam, for heaven's sake! since you must marry the fellow, e'en make the most on't.

Leo. Oh!

Enter Don Pedro *and* Don John.

Jac. So—how d'ye do now? Come, cheer up. See, here he comes.—By my troth, and a pretty turned fellow.—[*Aside.*] He'll set all to rights by to-morrow morning, I'll answer for him.

Don Fel. Don Pedro, you are welcome; let me embrace you.

Don Ped. In what terms, sir, shall I express what I owe you for the honour you do me? and with what prospect of return can I receive this inestimable present?—Your picture, madam, made what impression art could stamp, but nature has done more. What wounds your sex can give, or ours receive, I feel.

Don Fel. Come son, (for I'm in haste to call you so)—but what's this I see? Alvarada here! Whence, sir, this insolence; to come within my doors after you know what has passed? Who brought you here?

Don Ped. 'Twas I, sir.

Don Fel. But do you know that he—

Don Ped. Sir, he's the best of my friends.

Don Fel. But do you know, I say, that he would—

Don Ped. Hinder this marriage, 'tis true.

Don Fel. Yes, because he designed—

Don Ped. I know his design, sir; 'tis to hinder all his friends from marrying. Pray forgive him.

Don Fel. Then to prevent for ever his designs here, come hither, Leonora, and give Don Pedro your hand.

Don John. Keep down, my kindling jealousy: I've something tortures me I never felt till now. [*Aside.*

Don Ped. [*To* Leonora.] Why this backwardness, madam? Where a father chooses, a daughter may with modesty approve. Pray give me your hand.

Don Guz. I cannot see it. [*Turning from them.*

Don Fel. [*Aside to* Leonora.] Are you distracted? Will you let him know your folly? Give him your hand, for shame!

Leo. Oh! Don Guzman, I am yours. [*Sighing, and giving her hand carelessly.*

Don Guz. Madam! [*Turning.*

Don Fel. What a fatal slip! [*Aside.*

Leo. 'Twas not to you I spoke, sir.

Don Ped. But him it was she named, and thought on too, I fear. I'm much alarmed. [*Aside.*

Don Fel. [*To* Leonora.] Repair what you have done, and look more cheerful on him.

Leo. Repair what you have done, and kill me.

Don Fel. Fool!

Leo. Tyrant!

Jac. A very humdrum marriage this. [*Aside.*

Don Guz. Pray, sister, let's retire; for I can bear this sight no longer.

Isab. My dear, farewell! I pity you indeed.

Leo. I am indeed an object of your pity. [*Exeunt* Don Guzman *and* Isabella.

Don Fel. Come daughter, come my son, let's to the church and tie this happy knot.

Don Ped. I'll wait upon you, sir.

[*Exit* Don Felix, *leading* Leonora, Jacinta *following.*

Don John. I love her, and I love her still. Fate, do thy worst, I'll on. [*Aside.*

Don Ped. To name another man, in giving me her hand! [*Aside.*

Don John. How am I racked and torn with jealousy! [*Aside.*

Don Ped. 'Tis doubtless so, Don Guzman has her heart. [*Aside.*

Don John. [*Aside.*] The bridegroom's thought-

ful. The lady's trip has furnished him with some matrimonial reflections. They'll agree with him at this time, perhaps, better than my company. I'll leave him.—[*Aloud.*] Don Pedro, adieu! we shall meet again at night.

Don Ped. Pray stay; I have need of a friend's counsel.

Don John. What, already?

Don Ped. Already.

Don John. That's to say, you have already enough of matrimony.

Don Ped. I scarce know what I have, nor am I sure of what I am.

Re-enter LOPEZ.

Lop. [*To* DON PEDRO.] An't please your honour, yonder's your man Bertrand just arrived; his horse and he so tired of one another, that they both came down upon the pavement at the stable-door.

Don Ped. [*To* DON JOHN.] He brings news from my father.

Lop. I believe he does, and hasty news too; but if you stay till he brings it hither, I believe it will come but slowly. But here's his packet; I suppose that will do as well as his company. [*Gives a letter.*

Don Ped. [*Reads to himself.*] My dear friend, here's ill news.

Don John. What's the matter?

Don Ped. My poor old father's dying.

Don John. I'm mighty sorry for't; 'tis a weighty stroke I must confess; the burden of his estate will almost bear you down. But we must submit to Heaven's good will.

Don Ped. You talk, Alvarada, like a perfect stranger to that tenderness methinks every son should feel for a good father. For my part, I've received such repeated proofs of an uncommon affection from mine, that the loss of a mistress could scarce touch me nearer. You'll believe me, when you see me leave Leonora a virgin till I have seen the good old man.

Don John. That will be a proof indeed; Heaven's blessing must needs fall upon so dutiful a son; but I don't know how its judgments may deal with so indifferent a lover.

Don Ped. Oh, I shall have time enough to repair this seeming small neglect. But before I go, pray a word or two with you alone.—Lopez, wait without.—[*Exit* LOPEZ.] You see, my dearest friend, I am engaged with Leonora—perhaps I have done wrong; but 'tis gone too far to talk or think of a retreat; I shall go directly from this place to the altar, and there seal the eternal contract. That done, I'll take post to see my father, if I can, before he dies.
I leave then here a young and beauteous bride;
But that which touches every string of thought,
I fear, I leave her wishing I were Guzman.
If it be so, no doubt he knows it well;
And he that knows he's loved by Leonora,
Can let no fair occasion pass to gain her:
My absence is his friend, but you are mine,
And so the danger's balanced. Into your hands,
My dear, my faithful Alvarada—[*Embracing him*]
I put my honour, I put my life;
For both depend on Leonora's truth.
Observe her lover, and—neglect not her.
You are wise, you are active, you are brave and true.
You have all the qualities that man should have
For such a trust; and I by consequence
Have all the assurance man can have;
You'll, as you ought, discharge it.

Don John. A very hopeful business you would have me undertake—keep a woman honest!—Udsdeath! I'd as soon undertake to keep Portocarero honest. Look you, we are friends, intimate friends;—you must not be angry if I talk freely. Women are naturally bent to mischief, and their actions run in one continued torrent till they die. But the less a torrent's checked, the less mischief it does; let it alone, perhaps, 'twill only kiss the banks and pass; but stop it, 'tis insatiable.

Don Ped. I would not stop it; but could
I gently turn its course where it might run,
And vent itself with innocence, I would.
Leonora of herself is virtuous;
Her birth, religion, modesty, and sense,
Will guide her wishes where they ought to point.—
But yet let guards be what they will,
That place is safest that is ne'er attack'd.

Don John. As far as I can serve you, in hindering Guzman's approaches, you may command me.

Don Ped. That's all I ask.

Don John. Then all you ask is granted.

Don Ped. I am at ease; farewell!

Don John. Heaven bring you safe to us again!—[*Exit* DON PEDRO.] Yes, I shall observe her, doubt it not. I wish nobody may observe me; for I find I'm no more master of myself. Don Guzman's passion for her adds to mine; but when I think on what Don Pedro'll reap, I'm fire and flame! Something must be done; what, let love direct, for I have nothing else to guide me.

Re-enter LOPEZ.

Lop. [*Aside.*] Don Pedro is mounting for his journey, and leaves a young, warm, liquorish hussy, with a watery mouth, behind him.—Hum! if she falls handsomely in my master's way, let her look to her——'st—there he is. Doing what?—thinking? That's new; and if any good comes on't, that will be newer still.

Don John. [*Aside.*] How! abuse the trust a friend reposes in me? and while he thinks me waking for his peace, employ the stretch of thought to make him wretched?

Lop. Not to interrupt your pious meditations, sir, pray have you seen——Seen what, fool? Why he can't see thee. Egad, I believe the little blind bastard has whipped him through the heart in earnest.

Don John. [*Aside.*] Pedro would never have done this by me. How do I know that? Why, he swore he was my friend. Well, and I swore I was his. Why then, if I find I can break my oath, why should not I conclude he would do as much by his?

Lop. [*Aside.*] His countenance begins to clear up: I suppose things may be drawing to a conclusion.

Don John. [*Aside.*] Ay, 'tis just so; and I don't believe he would have debated the matter half so long as I have done: egad, I think I have put myself to a great expense of morality about it. I'm sure, at least, my stock's out: but I have a fund of love, I hope, may last a little longer.—[*Observing* LOPEZ.] Oh, are you there, sir?

Lop. I think so, sir.—I won't be positive in anything.

Don John. Follow me; I have some business to employ you in you'll like. [*Exit.*

Lop. I won't be positive in that neither. I guess

what you are going about;—there's roguery a-foot! This is at Leonora, who I know hates him: nothing under a rape will do't. He'll be hanged; and then what becomes of thee, my little Lopez? Why, the honour to a—dingle dangle by him; which he'll have the good-nature to be mighty sorry for. But I may chance to be beforehand with him: if we are not taken in the fact, they'll perhaps do him the honour to set a reward upon his head. Which if they do, Don, I shall go near to follow your moral example, secure my pardon, make my fortune, and hang you up for the good of your country. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Don Felix's *House.*

Enter Don Felix, Don Pedro, Leonora, *and* Jacinta.

Don Fel. How, son! obliged to leave us immediately, say you?

Don Ped. My ill fortune, sir, will have it so.

Leo. [*Aside.*] What can this be!

Don Fel. Pray what's the matter? You surprise me.

Don Ped. This letter, sir, will inform you.

Don Fel. [Reads.] *My dear son, Bertrand has brought me the welcome news of your return, and has given me your letter; which has in some sort revived my spirits in the extremity I am. I daily expect my exit from this world. 'Tis now six years since I have seen you; I should be glad to do it once again before I die. If you will give me that satisfaction, you must be speedy. Heaven preserve you!*—'Tis enough. The occasion I'm sorry for, but since the ties of blood and gratitude oblige you, far be it from me to hinder you. Farewell, my son! may you have a happy journey, and if it be Heaven's will, may the sight of so good a son revive so kind a father! I leave you to bid your wife adieu. [*Exit.*

Don Ped. I must leave you, my lovely bride;
With bitter pangs of separation. [but 'tis
Had I your heart to cheer me on my way,
I might, with such a cordial, run my course:
But that support you want the power to give me.

Leo. Who tells you so?

Don Ped. My eyes and ears, and all the pains I bear.

Leo. When eyes and ears are much indulged,
Like favourite servants, they are apt to abuse
The too much trust their master places in 'em.

Don Ped. If I am abused,
Assist me with some fair interpretation
Of all that present trouble and disquiet,
Which is not in my power to overlook,
Nor yours to hide.

Leo. You might, methinks, have spared
My modesty; and, without forcing me
To name your absence, have laid my trouble there.

Don Ped. No, no, my fair deluder, that's a veil
Too thin to cover what's so hard to hide;
My presence, not my absence, is the cause.
Your cold reception at my first approach,
Prepared me for the stroke; and 'twas not long
Before your mouth confirm'd my doom: *Don Guzman, I am yours!*

Leo. Is't, then, impossible the mouth should utter one name for another?

Don Ped. Not at all, when it follows the dictates of the heart.

Leo. Were it even so, what wrong is from that heart received, where duty and where virtue are its rulers?

Don Ped. Where they preside our honour may be safe, yet our minds be on the rack.

Leo. This discourse will scarce produce a remedy; we'll end it therefore if you please, and leave the rest to time. Besides, the occasion of your journey presses you.

Don Ped. The occasion of my delay presses you, I fear, much more; you count the tedious minutes I am with you, and are reduced to mind me of my duty to free yourself from my sight.

Leo. You urge this thing too far, and do me wrong. The sentiments I have for you are much more favourable than your jealousy suffers 'em to appear. But if my heart has seemed to lean another way, before you had a title to it, you ought not to conclude I shall suffer it to do so long.

Don Ped. I know you have virtue, gratitude, and truth;
And therefore 'tis I love you to my ruin.
Could I believe you false, contempt would soon
Release me from my chains, which yet I can't
But wish to wear for ever; therefore,
Indulge at least your pity to your slave,
'Tis the soft path in which we tread to love.
I leave behind a tortured heart to move you:—
Weigh well its pains, think on its passion too,
Remember all its torments spring from you;
And if you cannot love, at least be true. [*Exit.*

Jac. Now, by my troth, madam, I am ready to cry. He's a pretty fellow, and deserves better luck.

Leo. I own he does: and his behaviour would engage anything that were unengaged. But, alas! I want his pity more than he does mine.

Jac. You do! Now, I'm of another mind. The moment he sees your picture he's in love with you; the moment he's in love with you, he embarks; and, like lightning, in a moment more he's here: where you are pleased to receive him with a *Don Guzman, I am yours!* Ah, poor man!

Leo. I own, Jacinta, he's unfortunate, but still I say my fate is harder yet. The irresistible passion I have for Guzman renders Don Pedro, with all his merit, odious to me; yet I must in his favour make eternal war against the strength of inclination and the man I love.

Jac. [*Aside.*] Um—If I were in her case, I could find an expedient for all this matter. But she makes such a bustle with her virtue, I dare not propose it to her.

Leo. Besides, Don Pedro possesses what he loves, but I must never think on poor Don Guzman more. [*Weeping.*

Jac. Poor Don Guzman, indeed! We han't said a word of the pickle he's in yet. Hark! somebody knocks—at the old rendezvous. It's he, on my conscience.

Leo. Let's be gone; I must think of him no more.

Jac. Yes, let's be gone: but let's know whether 'tis he or not first.

Leo. No, Jacinta; I must not speak with him any more.—[*Sighing.*] I'm married to another.

Jac. Married to another! well, married to another; why, if one were married to twenty others, one may give a civil gentleman an answer.

Leo. Alas! what wouldst thou have me say to him?

Jac. Say to him! why, one may find twenty things to say to a man. Say, that 'tis true you are married to another, and that a—'twould be a sin to think of anybody but your husband, and that a—you are of a timorous nature, and afraid of being damned; and that a—you would not have him die neither; that a—folks are mortal, and things sometimes come strangely about, and a widow's a widow, and—

Leo. Peace, Levity!—[*Sighing.*] But see who 'tis knocks.

Jac. Who's there?

Isab. [*Behind the scenes.*] 'Tis I, Isabella.

Leo. Isabella! What do you want, my dear?

Isab. Your succour, for Heaven's sake, Leonora. My brother will destroy himself.

Leo. Alas! it is not in my power to save him.

Isab. Permit him but to speak to you, that possibly may do.

Leo. Why have not I the force to refuse him?

Don Gus. [*Behind the scenes.*] Is it you, I hear, my poor lost mistress? Am I so happy once more to meet you where I so often have been blest?

Jac. Courage, madam, say a little something to him.

Don Gus. Not one kind word to a distracted lover?
No pity for a wretch you have made so miserable?

Leo. The only way to end that misery
Is to forget we ever thought of happiness.

Don Gus. And is that in your power? Ah, Leonora,
You never loved like me!

Leo. How I have loved, to Heaven I appeal!
But Heaven does now permit that love no more.

Don Gus. Why does it then permit us life and thought?
Are we deceived in its omnipotence?
Is it reduced
To find its pleasures in its creatures' pain?

Leo. In what, or where, the joys of heaven consist,
Lies deeper than a woman's line can fathom;
But this we know,
A wife must in her husband seek for hers,
And therefore I must think of you no more.
Farewell. [*Exit.*

Don Gus. Yet hear me, cruel Leonora.

Jac. It must be another time then, for she's whipped off now. All the comfort I can give you is, that I see she durst not trust herself any longer in your company. But hush, I hear a noise, get you gone, we shall be catched.

Leo. [*Within.*] Jacinta!

Jac. I come, I come, madam. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in the same.*

Enter LOPEZ.

Lop. If I mistake not, there are a brace of lovers intend to take some pains about madam, in her husband's absence. Poor Don Pedro! Well, methinks a man's in a very merry mood that marries a handsome wife. When I dispose of my person, it shall be to an ugly one: they take it so kindly, and are so full of acknowledgment; watch you, wait upon you, nurse you, humour you, are so fond, and so chaste. Or if the hussy has presumption enough to think of being otherwise, away with her into the mountains fifty leagues off; nobody opposes. If she's mutinous, give her discipline; everybody approves on't. Hang her! says one, he's kinder than she deserves; Damn her! says another, why does not he starve her? But if she's handsome, Ah the brute! cries one—Ah the Turk! cries 'tother: Why don't she cuckold him? says this fellow; Why does not she poison him? says that; and away comes a packet of epistles to advise her to't. Ah, poor Don Pedro! But enough. 'Tis now night, all's hush and still: everybody's a-bed, and what am I to do? Why, as other trusty domestics, sit up to let the thief in. But I suppose he won't be here yet; with the help of a small nap beforehand, I shall be in a better condition to perform the duty of a sentinel when I go to my post. This corner will just fit me. Come, Lopez, lie thee down, short prayers, and to sleep. [*He lies down.*

Enter JACINTA, *with a candle in her hand.*

Jac. So, I have put my poor lady to bed with nothing but sobs, tears, sighs, wishes, and a poor pillow to mumble, instead of a bridegroom, poor heart! I pity her; but everybody has their afflictions, and by the beads of my grandmother, I have mine. Tell me, kind gentlemen, if I have not something to excite you? Methinks I have a roguish eye, I'm sure I have a mettled heart. I'm soft, and warm, and sound, may it please ye. Whence comes it then, this rascal Lopez, who now has been two hours in the family, has not yet thought it worth his while to make one motion towards me? Not that the blockhead's charms have moved me, but I'm angry mine han't been able to move him. I doubt I must begin with the lubber; my reputation's at stake upon't, and I must rouse the drone somehow.

Lop. [*Rubbing his eyes, and coming on.*] What a damned condition is that of a valet! No sooner do I, in comfortable slumber, close my eyes, but methinks my master's upon me, with fifty slaps o' th' back, for making him wait in the street. I have his orders to let him in here to-night, and so I had e'en—who's that?—Jacinta!—Yes. A caterwauling!—like enough.

Jac. The fellow's there; I had best not lose the occasion. [*Aside.*

Lop. The slut's handsome; I begin to kindle. But if my master should be at the door—why there let him be till the matter's over. [*Aside.*

Jac. Shall I advance? [*Aside.*

Lop. Shall I venture? [*Aside.*

Jac. How severe a look he has! [*Aside.*

Lop. She seems very reserved. [*Aside.*

Jac. If he should put the negative upon me. [*Aside.*

Lop. She seems a woman of great discretion; I tremble. [*Aside.*

Jac. Hang it, I must venture. [*Aside.*

Lop. Faint heart never won fair lady. [*Aside.*

Jac. Lopez?

Lop. Jacinta!

Jac. O dear heart! is't you?

Lop. Charming Jacinta! fear me not.

Jac. [*Aside.*] O ho! he begins to talk soft—then let us take upon us again.

Lop. Cruel Jacinta, whose mouth (small as it is) has made but one morsel of my heart.

Jac. [*Aside.*] It's well he prevents me. I was going to leap about the rascal's neck.

Lop. Barbare Jacinta, cast your eyes
On your poor Lopez, ere he dies.

Jac. [*Aside.*] Poetry too! Nay then I have done his business.

Lop. Feel how I burn with hot desire,
Ah! pity me, and quench my fire;
Deaf, my fair tyrant, deaf to my woes,
Nay then, barbarian, in it goes. [*Drawing a knife.*

Jac. Why how now, Jack-sauce? why how now, Presumption? What encouragement have I given you, Jack-a-lent, to attack me with your tenders? I could tear your eyes out, sirrah, for thinking I am such a one. What indecency have you seen in my behaviour, impudence, that you should think me for your beastly turn, you goat you?

Lop. Patience, my much offended goddess, 'tis honourably I would share your bed.

Jac. Peace, I say—Mr. Liquorish. I, for whom the most successful cavaliers employ their sighs in vain, shall I look down upon a crawling worm? Pha!—see that crop-ear there, that vermin, that wants to eat at a table would set his master's mouth a watering!

Lop. May I presume to make an humble meal upon what savoury remnants he may leave?

Jac. No.

Lop. 'Tis hard! 'tis wondrous hard!

Jac. Leave me.

Lop. 'Tis pitiful, 'tis wondrous pitiful!

Jac. Begone! I say.—
Thus ladies 'tis, perhaps, sometimes with you;
With scorn you fly the thing which you pursue.
[*Aside.—Exit.*

Lop. 'Tis very well, Mrs. Flipflap, 'tis very well; but do you hear—Tawdry, you are not so alluring as you think you are—Comb-brush, nor I so much in love!—your maidenhead may chance to grow mouldy with your airs;—the pox be your bedfellow! there's that for you.—Come, let's think no more on't, sailors must meet with storms; my master's going to sea too. He may chance to fare no better with the lady than I have done with her Abigail: there may be foul weather there too. I reckon at present he may be lying by under a mizen at the street-door, I think it rains too for his comfort. What if I should leave him there an hour or two in fresco, and try to work off the amour that way? No; people will be physicked their own way. But perhaps I might save his life by't—yes, and have my bones broke for being so officious; therefore, if you are at the door, Don John, walk in and take your fortune. [*Opens the door.*

Enter DON JOHN.

Don John. Hist! hist!

Lop. Hist! hist!

Don John. Lopez!

Lop. [*Aside.*] The devil!—[*Aloud.*] Tread softly.

Don John. Are they all asleep?

Lop. Dead.

Don John. Enough; shut the door.

Lop. 'Tis done.

Don John. Now begone.

Lop. What! shut the door first, and then begone? Now, methinks, I might as well have gone first, and then shut the door.

Don John. I bid you begone, you dog you! do you find the way.

Lop. [*Aside.*] Stark mad, and always so when a woman's in chase.—[*Aloud.*] But, sir, will you keep your chief minister out of the secrets of your state? Pray let me know what this night's work is to be.

Don John. No questions, but march.

Lop. Very well.—[*Goes to the door, and returns.*] But, sir, shall I stay for you in the street?

Don John. No, nor stir out of the house.

Lop. So. Well, sir, I'll do just as you have ordered me; I'll be gone, and I'll stay; and I'll march, and I won't stir, and—just as you say, sir.

Don John. I see you are afraid, you rascal you.

Lop. Passably.

Don John. Well, be it so; but you shan't leave the house, sir; therefore begone to your hogstye, and wait further orders.

Lop. [*Aside.*] But first I'll know how you intend to dispose of yourself.
[*Conceals himself behind the door.*

Don John. All's hush and still; and I am at the point of being a happy—villain. That though comes uninvited:—then like an uninvited guest let it be treated: begone, intruder! Leonora's charms turn vice to virtue, treason into truth; nature, who has made her the supreme object of our desires, must needs have designed her the regulator of our morals. Whatever points at her, is pointed right. We are all her due, mankind's the dower which heaven has settled on her; and he's the villain that would rob her of her tribute. I therefore, as in duty bound, will in, and pay her mine.

Lop. [*Aside.*] There he goes, i'faith; he seemed as if he had a qualm just now; but he never goes without a dram of conscience-water about him, to set matters right again.

Don John. This is her door, 'tis locked; but I have a smith about me will make her staple fly.
[*Pulls out some irons, and forces the lock.*

Lop. [*Aside.*] Hark! hark! if he is not equipped for a housebreaker too. Very well, he has provided two strings to his bow; if he 'scapes the rape, he may be hanged upon the burglary.

Don John. There, 'tis done. So.—No watch-light burning?—[*Peeping into her chamber.*] All in darkness? so much the better, 'twill save a great deal of blushing on both sides. Methinks I feel myself mighty modest, I tremble too; that's not proper at this time. Be firm, my courage, I have business for thee.—So—how am I now?—pretty well. Then by your leave, Don Pedro, I must supply your neglect. You should not have married till you were ready for consummation; a maidenhead ought no more to lie upon a handsome bride, than an impeachment upon an innocent minister. [*Exit into the chamber.*

Lop. [*Coming forwards.*] Well done, well done; Gad a-marcy, my little Judas! Unfortunate Don Pedro! thou hast left thy purse in the hands of a robber; and while thou art galloping to pay the last duty to thy father, he's at least upon the trot to pay the first to thy wife. Ah, the traitor! What a capilotade of damnation will there be

cooked up for him! But softly: let's lay our ear to the door, and pick some curiosities.—I hear no noise.—There's no light; we shall have him blunder where he should not do, by and by.—Commit a rape upon her tea table perhaps, break all her china, and then she'll be sure to hang him. But hark!—now I hear—nothing; she does not say a word; she sleeps curiously.—How if she should take it all for a dream now? or her virtue should be fallen into an apoplex?—Where the pox will all this end?

Leo. [*Within.*] Jacinta! Beatrix! Fernandes! Murder! murder! help! help! help!

Lop. Now the play begins; it opens finely.

Leo. [*Within.*] Father! Alphonso! Save me! O save me!

Leo. Comedy or tragedy for a ducat! for fear of the latter, decamp Lopez. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—Leonora's *Bedchamber.*

Leonora *discovered in a gown, holding* Don John *by the sleeve.*

Leo. Whoever you are, villain, you shan't escape me; and though your efforts have been in vain, you shan't fail to receive the recompense of your attempt.—Help, ho, help there! help!

[Don John *breaks from her, but can't find the door.*

Don John. [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, I shall be undone! where is this damned door?

Leo. He'll get away: a light there, quickly!

Enter Don Guzman *with his sword drawn.*]

Don Gus. Where are you, fair angel? I come to lose my life in your defence.

Don John. [*Aside.*] That's Guzman's voice; the devil has sent him. But we are still in the dark; I have one tour yet, impudence be my aid.—[*Aloud.*] Lights there, ho! Where is the villain that durst attempt the virtuous Leonora?

Don Gus. His life shall make her satisfaction.

Don John. Or mine shall fall in his pursuit.

Don Gus. 'Tis by my hands that she shall see him die.

Don John. My sword shall lay him bleeding at her feet.

Leo. [*Aside.*] What can this mean? But here's lights at last, thank the just bounteous heaven.

Don John. Enter with the light there; but secure the door, lest the traitor 'scape my vengeance.

Enter Don Pedro *with a light, he finds* Leonora *between them; both their swords drawn.*

Leo. O Heavens! what is't I see?

Don John. Don Pedro here!

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] What monstrous scene is this!

Don Gus. [*Aside.*] What accident has brought him here?

Don John. [*Aside.*] Now I am intrigued indeed. [Don Pedro *steps back, and shuts the door.*

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] This mystery must unfold before we part. What torments has my fate provided me? Is this the comfort I'm to reap, to dry my tears for my poor father's death?—[*Aloud.*] Ah, Leonora!

Leo. [*Aside.*] Alas! where will this end! [*Falling into a chair.*

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] Naked! and thus attended at the dead of night!—my soul is froze at what I see. Confusion sits in all their faces, and in large characters I read the ruin of my honour and my love.—[*Aloud.*] Speak, statues, if you yet have power to speak, why at this time of night you are found with Leonora?—None speak!—Don John, it is from you I ought to know.

Don John. My silence may inform you.

Don Ped. Your silence does inform me of my shame, but I must have some information more; explain the whole.

Don John. I shall. You remember, Don Pedro—

Don Ped. Be quick.

Don John. You remember you charged me before you went—

Don Ped. I remember well, go on.

Don John. With the care of your honour.

Don Ped. I did: despatch.

Don John. Very well; you see Don Guzman in this apartment, you see your wife naked, and you see me, my sword in my hand; that's all.

Don Ped. [*Drawing upon* Don Guzman.] 'Tis here then I am to revenge my wrongs.

Don Gus. Hold!

Don Ped. Villain, defend thyself!

Leo. O Heaven!

Don Gus. Yet hear me.

Don Ped. What canst thou say?

Don Gus. The truth, as holy Heaven itself is truth. I heard the shrieks and cries of Leonora; what the occasion was I knew not, but she repeated 'em with so much vehemence, I found, whatever her distress might be, her succour must be sudden; so leaped the wall that parts our houses, and flew to her assistance. Don John can, if he please, inform you more.

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] Mankind's a villain, and this may be true;
Yet 'tis too monstrous for a quick conception.
I should be cautious how I wrong Don John.
Sure 'tis not right to balance.
I yet have but their words against their words;
I know Don John for my friend, and Guzman for my rival. What can be clearer? Yet hold: if Leonora's innocent, she may untangle all.—[*Aloud.*] Madam, I should be glad to know (if I have so much interest left) which way your evidence will point my sword?

Leo. My lord, I'm in the same perplexity with you. All I can say is this, one of 'em came to force me, t'other to save me: but the night confounding the villany of the guilty with the generosity of the innocent, I still am ignorant to which I owe my gratitude or my resentment.

Don Gus. But, madam, did you not hear me cry I came to help you?

Leo. I own it.

Don John. And did you not hear me threaten to destroy the author of your fears?

Leo. I can't deny it.

Don Gus. What can there be more to clear me?

Don John. Or me?

Don Ped. Yet one's a villain still.—[*Aside.*] My confusion but increases: yet why confused? It is, it must be Guzman. But how came Don John here? Right. Guzman has said how he came to her aid, but Alvarada could not enter but by treason.—[*Aloud.*] Then perish—

Don Gus. Who?

Don John. Who?

Don Ped. Just gods! instruct me who. [*Knocking at the door.*

Don Fel. [*Within.*] Let me in, open the door!

Leo. 'Tis my father.

Don Ped. No matter, keep the door fast.—[*Aside.*] I'll have this matter go no further, till I can reach the depth on't.—[*Aloud.*] Don Guzman, leave the house; I must suspend my vengeance for a time.

Don Guz. I obey you; but I'll lose my life, or show my innocence. [*Exit.*

Don Fel. [*Within.*] Open the door; why am I kept out?

Don Ped. Don John, follow me by this back way.—And you, Leonora, retire. [*Exit* LEONORA.

Don John. [*Aside.*] If Don Guzman's throat were cut, would not this bustle end?—Yes.—Why, then, if his throat be not cut, may this bustle end me. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Don GUZMAN'S *House.*

Enter DON GUZMAN *and* GALINDO.

Don Guz. [*Musing.*] Galindo!

Gal. Sir!

Don Guz. Try if you can see Jacinta; let her privately know I would fain speak with her.

Gal. It shall be done, sir. [*Exit.*

Don Guz. Sure villany and impudence were never on the stretch before! This traitor has racked 'em till they crack. To what a plunge the villain's tour has brought me! Pedro's resentment must at last be pointed here. But that's a trifle; had he not ruined me with Leonora, I easily had passed him by the rest.—What's to be done? Which way shall I convince her of my innocence? The blood of him who has dared declare me guilty, may satisfy my vengeance, but not aid my love. No, I'm lost with her for ever—

Enter JACINTA.

Speak, is't not so, Jacinta? Am I not ruin'd with the virtuous Leonora?

Jac. One of you, I suppose, is.

Don Guz. Which dost thou think?

Jac. Why, he that came to spoil all; who should it be?

Don Guz. Prithee be serious with me if thou canst for one small moment, and advise me which way I shall take to convince her of my innocence, that it was I that came to do her service?

Jac. Why you both came to do her service, did not you?

Don Guz. Still trifling?

Jac. No, by my troth, not I!

Don Guz. Then turn thy thoughts to ease me in my torment, and be my faithful witness to her, That Heaven and Hell and all their wrath I imprecate, if ever once I knew one fleeting thought, that durst propose to me so impious an attempt. No, Jacinta, I love her well; but love with that humility, whatever misery I feel,
My torture ne'er shall urge me on to seize,
More than her bounty gives me leave to take.

Jac. And the murrain take such a lover and his humility both, say I. Why sure, sir, you are not in earnest in this story, are you?

Don Guz. Why dost thou question it?

Jac. Because I really and seriously thought you innocent.

Don Guz. Innocent! what dost thou mean?

Jac. Mean! why what should I mean? I mean that I concluded you loved my lady to that degree you could not live without her: and that the thought of her being given up to another made your passion flame out like mount Etna. That upon this your love got the bridle in his teeth, and ran away with you into her chamber, where that impertinent spy upon her and you, Don John, followed, and prevented farther proofs of your affection.

Don Guz. Why sure—

Jac. Why sure, thus I thought it was, and thus she thinks it is. If you have a mind in the depth of your discretion to convince her of your innocence —may your innocence be your reward. I'm sure were I in her place, you should never have any other from me.

Don Guz. Was there then no merit in flying to her assistance when I heard her cries?

Jac. As much as the constable and the watch might have pretended to—something to drink.

Don Guz. This is all raillery; 'tis impossible she can be pleased with such an attempt.

Jac. 'Tis impossible she can be pleased with being reduced to make the attempt upon you.

Don Guz. But was this a proper way to save her blushes?

Jac. 'Twas in the dark, that's one way.

Don Guz. But it must look like downright violation.

Jac. If it did not feel like it, what did that signify? Come, sir, waggery apart, you know I'm your servant, I have given you proofs on't. Therefore don't distrust me now if I tell you, this quarrel may be made up with the wife, though perhaps not with the husband. In short, she thinks you were first in her chamber, and has not the worse opinion of you for it; she makes allowance for your sufferings, and has still love enough for you, not to be displeased with the utmost proofs you can give, that you have still a warm remain for her.

Don Guz. If this be true, and that she thought 'twas me, why did she cry out to expose me?

Jac. Because at that time she did not think 'twas you. Will that content you? And now she does think 'twas you, your business is to let her think so on; for in a word, I can see she's concerned at the danger she has brought you into, and I believe would be heartily glad to see you well out on't.

Don Guz. 'Tis impossible she can forgive me.

Jac. Oons!—Now Heaven forgive me, for I had a great oath upon the very tip of my tongue; you'd make one mad with your impossibles, and your innocence, and your humilities. 'Sdeath, sir, d'you think a woman makes no distinction between the assaults of a man she likes and one she don't? My lady hates Don John, and if she thought 'twas

he had done this job, she'd hang him for't in her own garters; she likes you, and if you should do such another, you might still die in your bed like a bishop for her.

Don Gus. Well, I'll dispute no farther. I put myself into thy hands. What am I to do next?

Jac. Why, do as she bids you; be in the way at the old rendezvous, she'll take the first occasion she can to speak to you; and when you meet, do as I bid you, and instead of your innocent and humble, be guilty and resolute. Your mistress is now married, sir, consider that. She has changed her situation, and so must you your battery. Attack a maid gently, a wife warmly, and be as rugged with a widow as you can. Good bye t'ye, sir. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—LEONORA'S *Apartment.*

Enter DON PEDRO.

Don Ped. In what distraction have I pass'd this night!
Sure I shall never close my eyes again.
No rack can equal what I feel.
Wounded in both my honour and my love;
They have pierced me in two tender parts.
Yet could I take my just revenge,
It would in some degree assuage my smart.
Oh, guide me Heaven to that cordial drop!—
Hold! a glance of light I think begins to—yes—right. When yesterday I brought Don John hither, was not Don Felix much disturbed?—He was. And why?—That may be worth inquiring. But something more occurs. At my arrival in this city,
Was I not told two cavaliers were warm
In the pursuit of Leonora?
One I remember well they named; 'twas Guzman:
The other I am yet a stranger to.
I fear I shall not be so long—'Tis Alvarada;
O the traitor!—yet I may wrong him much. I have Guzman's own confession that he passed the wall to come to Leonora.—Oh, but 'twas to her assistance.—
And so it might, and he a villain still.
There are assistances of various sorts.—
What were her wants? That's dark.—But whatsoe'er
They were, he came to her assistance.
Death be his portion for his ready service!

Enter DON FELIX.

Don Fel. You avoid me, Don Pedro; 'tis not well. Am I not your father, have you not reason to believe I am your friend?

Don Ped. I have.

Don Fel. Why do you not then treat me like a father and a friend? The mystery you make to me of last night's disturbance I take unkindly from you. Come tell me your grief, that if I can I may assuage it.

Don Ped. Nothing but vengeance can give me ease.

Don Fel. If I desire to know your wrongs, 'tis to assist you in revenging them.

Don Ped. Know then, that last night in this apartment I found Don Guzman and Don John.

Don Fel. Guzman and Alvarada!

Don Ped. Yes; and Leonora almost naked between them, crying out for aid.

Don Fel. Were they both guilty?

Don Ped. One was come to force her, t'other to rescue her.

Don Fel. Which was the criminal?

Don Ped. Of that I yet am ignorant. They accuse each other.

Don Fel. Can't your wife determine it?

Don Ped. The darkness of the night put it out of her power.

Don Fel. But I perhaps may bring some light
I have part in the affront: [to aid you.
And though my arm's too old and weak to serve you,
My counsel may be useful to your vengeance.
Know then, that Don Guzman has a long time pursued my daughter; and I as resolutely refused his suit: which however has not hindered him from searching all occasions to see and speak to her. Don John, on his side—

Don Ped. Don John's my friend, and I am confident—

Don Fel. That confidence destroys you. Hear my charge, and be yourself his judge. He too has been a pressing suitor to my daughter.

Don Ped. Impossible!

Don Fel. To me myself, he has owned his love to her.

Don Ped. Good gods! Yet still this leaves the mystery where it was; this charge is equal.

Don Fel. 'Tis true; but yonder's one (if you can make her speak) I have reason to believe can tell us more.—Ho, Jacinta!

Enter JACINTA.

Jac. Do you call me, sir?

Don Fel. Yes; Don Pedro would speak with you.—[*Aside to* DON PEDRO.] I'll leave you with her; press her both by threats and promises, and if you find your wife in fault, old as I am, her father too, I'll raise my arm to plunge this dagger in her breast; and by that fermeté convince the world, my honour's dearer to me than my child. [*Exit.*

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] Heaven grant me power to stifle my rage, till 'tis time to let my vengeance fly!—Jacinta, come near: I have some business with you.

Jac. [*Aside.*] His business with me at this time can be good for nothing, I doubt.—[*Aloud.*] What commands have you, sir, for me? for I'm not very well.

Don Ped. What's your disorder?

Jac. A little sort of a something towards an ague, I think.

Don Ped. You don't seem so ill but you may tell me—

Jac. Oh, I can tell you nothing, sir, I assure you.

Don Ped. You answer me before you hear my question. That looks as if you knew—

Jac. I know that what you are going to ask me, is a secret I'm out at.

Don Ped. [*Offering her a purse.*] Then this shall let thee into it.

Jac. I know nothing of the matter.

Don Ped. Come, tell me all, and take thy reward.

Jac. I know nothing of the matter, I say.

Don Ped. [*Drawing his sword.*] Speak; or by all the flame and fire of hell eternal—

Jac. O Lard! O Lard! O Lard!

Don Ped. Speak, or th'art dead.

Jac. But if I do speak, shan't I be dead for all that?

Don Ped. Speak, and thou art safe.

Jac. Well—O Lard!—I'm so frighted!—But if I must speak then—O dear heart!—give me the purse.

Don Ped. There.

Jac. Why truly, between a purse in one's hand—and—a sword in one's guts, I think there's little room left for debate.

Don Ped. Come, begin, I'm impatient.

Jac. Begin! let me see; where shall I begin? at Don Guzman, I think.

Don Ped. What of him?

Jac. Why he has been in love with my lady these six years.

Don Ped. I know it, but how has she received him?

Jac. Received him! Why—as young maids use to receive handsome fellows; at first ill, afterwards better.

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] Furies!—[*Aloud.*] Did they ever meet?

Jac. A little.

Don Ped. By day or night?

Jac. Both.

Don Ped. Distraction! Where was their rendezvous?

Jac. Where they could not do one another much good.

Don Ped. As how?

Jac. As through a hole in a wall.

Don Ped. The strumpet banters me.—Be serious, Insolence, or I shall spoil your gaiety; I'm not disposed to mirth.

Jac. Why I am serious, if you like my story the better for't.

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] How miserable a wretch am I!

Jac. I tell you there's a wall parts their two houses, and in that wall there's a hole. How the wall came by the hole, I can't tell; mayhap by chance, mayhap by no chance; but there 'tis, and there they use to prattle.

Don Ped. And this is truth?

Jac. I can't bate you a word on't, sir.

Don Ped. When did they meet there last?

Jac. Yesterday; I suppose 'twas only to bid one another adieu.

Don Ped. Ah, Jacinta, thou hast pierced my soul!

Jac. [*Aside.*] And yet I han't told you half I could tell you, my don.

Don Ped. Where is this place you speak of?

Jac. There 'tis, if you are curious.

Don Ped. When they would speak with one another, what's the call?

Jac. Tinkle, tinkle.

Don Ped. A bell?

Jac. It is.

Don Ped. Ring!

Jac. What do you mean, sir?

Don Ped. [*Hastily.*] Ring!

Jac. 'Tis done. [*She makes the signal.*

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] I'll make use of her to examine him.—[*Aloud.*] Does he come?

Jac. Not yet.

Don Ped. Pull again.

Jac. You must give him time, sir; my lady always does so.

Don Ped. I hear something.

Jac. 'Tis he.

Don Guz. [*Within.*] Who's there?

Don Ped. [*Softly.*] Say you are Leonora.

[*Dumb show of her unwillingness, and his threatening.*

Jac. [*Softly.*] 'Tis Leonora.

Don Guz. What are your commands, madam? Is it possible so unfortunate a wretch as I can be capable of serving you?

[Don Pedro *whispers* Jacinta, *who seems backward to speak.*

Jac. I come to ask you, how you could so far forget that infinite regard you have professed, to make an attempt so dangerous both to yourself and me; and which, with all the esteem and love I have ever borne you, you scarce could hope I ever should forgive you.

Don Guz. Alas, my hopes and fears were vanish'd too.
My counsel was my love and my despair.
If they advised me wrong, of them complain,
For it was you who made 'em my directors.

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] The villain owns the fact. It seems he thinks
He has not much to fear from her resentment.
Oh, torture!

Enter Leonora.

Jac. [*Aside.*] So, she's here; that's as I expected: now we are blown up.

Leo. [*Aside, not seeing them.*] If I don't mistake, I heard Don Guzman's call. I can't refuse to answer it; forgive me, gods, and let my woman's weakness plead my cause.—How! my husband here! Nay then—

Don Ped. You seem disordered, madam; pray what may be the cause?

Leo. [*Confused.*] I don't know really; I'm not—I don't know that—

Don Ped. You did not know that I was here, I guess.

Leo. Yes I did, and—came to speak with you.

Don Ped. I'm not at present in a talking humour,
But if your tongue is set to conversation,
There's one behind the wall will entertain you.

Don Guz. But is it possible, fair Leonora, that you can pardon my attempt?

Don Ped. [*To* Leonora.] You hear him, madam; he dares own it to you.

Leo. [*Aside.*] Jacinta winks; I guess what scene they have been acting here. My part is now to play.—[*To* Don Pedro.] I see, sir, he dares own it: nor is he the first lover has presumed beyond the countenance he ever has received. Pray draw near, and hear what he has more to say: it is my interest you should know the depth of all has ever passed between us.—
I fain would know, Don Guzman, whether
In the whole conduct of my life, you've known
One step that could encourage you to hope
I ever could be yours,
But on the terms of honour which you sought me?

Don Guz. Not one.

Leo. Why then should you believe I could
Forgive the taking that by force which you
Already were convinced
I valued more the keeping than my life?

Don Guz. Had my love been as temperate as yours,
I with your reason had perhaps debated.

But not in reason, but in flames, I flew
To Leonora.

Leo. If strong temptation be allow'd a plea,
Vice, in the worst of shapes, has much to urge.
No,
Could anything have shaken me in virtue,
It must have been the strength of it in you.
Had you shone bright enough to dazzle me,
I blindly might have miss'd the path I meant
To tread: but now you have clear'd my sight for ever.
If therefore from this moment more you dare
To let me know one thought of love,
Though in the humblest style, expect to be
A sacrifice to him you attempt to wrong.
Farewell! [*She retires from him.*

Don Guz. Oh, stay and hear me! I have wronged myself, I'm innocent; by all that's sacred, just, and good, I'm innocent!

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] What does he mean?

Don Guz. I have owned a fact I am not guilty of; Jacinta can inform you, she knows I never—

Jac. I know! the man's mad. Pray be gone, sir, my lady will hear no more.—I'll shut him out, madam, shan't I?

Leo. I have no farther business with him.

[JACINTA *shuts up the hole.*

Enter ISABELLA *hastily.*

Isab. O Heavens, Leonora, where are you?—Don Pedro, you can assist me better.

Leo. What's the matter?

Don Ped. What is it, madam, I can serve you in?

Isab. In what the peace of my whole life consists, the safety of my brother. Don John's servant has this moment left me a letter for him, which I have opened, knowing there is an animosity of some time between 'em.

Don Ped. Well, madam!

Isab. O dear, it is a challenge, and what to do I know not! If I show it my brother, he'll immediately fly to the place appointed: and if I don't, he'll be accused of cowardice. One way I risk his life, t'other I ruin his honour.

Don Ped. What would you have me do, madam?

Isab. I'll tell you, sir: I only beg you'll go to the place where Don John expects him; tell him I have intercepted his letter, and make him promise you he'll send no more. By this generous charity you may hinder two men (whose piques are on a frivolous occasion) from murdering one another; and by this good office you'll repay the small debt you owe my brother for flying last night to Leonora's succour; and doubly pay the obligation you have to me upon the same occasion.

Don Ped. What obligation, madam? I am ignorant; pray inform me.

Isab. 'Twas I, sir, that first heard Leonora's cries, and raised my brother to her aid. Pray let me receive the same assistance from your prudence which you have had from my care and my brother's generosity. But pray lose no time. Don John is perhaps already on the spot, and not meeting my brother, may send a second message, which may be fatal.

Don Ped. Madam, be at rest; you shall be satisfied, I'll go this moment. I'll only ask you first whether you are sure you heard my wife call out for succour, before your brother passed the wall?

Isab. I did; why do you ask that question?

Don Ped. I have a reason, you may be sure.—[*Aside.*] Just Heaven, I adore thee! the truth at last shines clear, and by that villain Alvarada I'm betrayed. But enough, I'll make use of this occasion for my vengeance.—[*To* ISABELLA.] Where, madam, is it Don John is waiting?

Isab. But here, in a small field behind the garden.

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] His blood shall do me reason for his treachery.

Isab. Will you go there directly?

Don Ped. I will. Be satisfied. [*Exit.*

Leo. You weep, Isabella.

Isab. You see my trouble for a brother, for whom I would die, and a lover for whom I would live. They both are authors of my grief.

Leo. They both are instruments of my misfortune. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Field adjoining* DON FELIX'S *Garden.*

Enter LOPEZ.

Lop. O ho, my good signor Don John, you are mistaken in your man! I am your humble valet, 'tis true, and I am to obey you: but when you have got the devil in your body, and are upon your rantipole adventures, you shall Quixote it by yourself for Lopez. Yonder he is, waiting for poor Guzman, with a sword of a fathom and a half, a dagger for close engagement; and (if I don't mistake) a pocket pistol for extraordinary occasions. I think I am not in the wrong to keep a little out of the way. These matters will end in a court of justice, or I'm wrong in my foresight. Now that being a place where I am pretty well known, and not overmuch reputed, I believe 'tis best, neither to come in for prisoner nor evidence. But hold; yonder comes another Toledo. Don Guzman I presume; but I presume wrong; 'tis—who is't? Don Pedro, by all the powers! What the pox does he here, or what the pox do I here? I'm sure as matters stand, I ought to fly him like a creditor; but he sees me, 'tis too late to slip him.

Enter DON PEDRO.

Don Ped. How now, Lopez, where are you going?

Lop. I'm going, sir, I—I'm going—if you please I'm going about my business.

Don Ped. From whence do you come?

Lop. Only, only, sir, from—taking the air a little, I'm mightily muddled with a whur—round about in my head for this day or two; I'm going home to be let blood, as fast as I can, sir.

Don Ped. Hold, sir, I'll let you blood here.—[*Aside.*] This rascal may have borne some part in this late adventure: He's a coward, I'll try to frighten it out of him.—[*Aloud.*] You traitor you, y'are dead!

[*Seizes* LOPEZ *by the collar, and draws his poniard.*

Lop. Mercy, Don Pedro! [*Kneeling.*

Don Ped. Are you not a villain?

Lop. Yes, if you please.

Don Ped. Is there so great a one upon earth?

Lop. With respect to my master; no.

Don Ped. Prepare then to die.

Lop. Give me but time, and I will. But noble Don Pedro, just Don Pedro, generous Don Pedro, what is it I have done?

Don Ped. What if thou darest deny, I'll plunge this dagger deep into thy throat, and drive the falsehood to thy heart again. Therefore take heed, and on thy life declare; didst thou not this last night open my doors to let Don Guzman in?

Lop. Don Guzman!

Don Ped. Don Guzman? Yes, Don Guzman, traitor, him!

Lop. Now may the sky crush me, if I let in Don Guzman.

Don Ped. Who did you let in then? It wan't your master sure! if it was him, you did your duty, I have no more to say.

Lop. Why then if I let in anybody else, I'm a son of a whore. [*Rising.*

Don Ped. Did he order you beforehand, or did you do't upon his knocking?

Lop. Why he; I'll tell you, sir, he—pray put up that brilliant; it sparkles so in my eyes, it almost blinds me.—[Don Pedro *sheathes his poniard.*] Thank you, sir.—Why, sir, I'll tell you just how the matter was, but I hope you won't consider me as a party?

Don Ped. Go on, thou art safe.

Lop. Why then, sir, (when for our sins,) you had left us, says my master to me, Lopez, says he, go and stay at old Don Felix's house, till Don Pedro returns, they'll pass thee for his servant, and think he has ordered thee to stay there. And then says he, dost hear, open me the door by Leonora's apartment to-night, for I have a little business, says he, to do there.

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] Perfidious wretch!

Lop. Indeed, I was at first a little wresty, and stood off; being suspicious (for I knew the man) that there might be some ill intentions. But he knew me too, takes me upon the weak side, whips out a long sword, and by the same means makes me do the thing as you have made me discover it. —[*Aside.*] There's neither liberty nor property in this land, since the blood of the Bourbons came amongst us.

Don Ped. Then you let him in, as he bid you?

Lop. I did: if I had not, I had never lived to tell you the story. Yes, I let him in.

Don Ped. And what followed?

Lop. Why he followed.

Don Ped. What?

Lop. His inclinations.

Don Ped. Which way?

Lop. The old way; to a woman.

Don Ped. Confound him!

Lop. In short, he got to madam's chamber, and before he had been there long, (though you know, sir, a little time goes a great way in some matters) I heard such a clutter of small shot, murder! murder! murder! rape! fire! help! and so forth.—But hold, here he comes himself, and can give you a more circumstantial account of the skirmish. [*Exit.*

Don Ped. I thank thee, Heaven, at last, for having pointed me to the victim I am to sacrifice.

Enter Don John.

Villain, defend thyself! [*Drawing.*

Don John. What do you mean?

Don Ped. To punish a traitor.

Don John. Where is he?

Don Ped. In the heart of a sworn friend.

Don John. [*Aside.*] I saw Lopez go from him; without doubt he has told him all.—[*Aloud.*] Of what am I suspected?

Don Ped. Of betraying the greatest trust that man could place in man.

Don John. And by whom am I accused.

Don Ped. By me. Have at thy traitor's heart.

Don John. Hold! and be not quite a madman! Pedro, you know me well. You know I am not backward upon these occasions, nor shall I refuse you any satisfaction you'll demand; but first, I will be heard, and tell you, that for a man of sense, you are pleased to make very odd conclusions.

Don Ped. Why, what is't possible thou canst invent to clear thyself?

Don John. To clear myself! Of what? I'm to be thanked for what I have done, and not reproached. I find I have been an ass, and pushed my friendship to that point, you find not virtue in yourself enough to conceive it in another. But henceforward I shall be a better husband on't.

Don Ped. I should be loath to find ingratitude could e'er be justly charged upon me: but after what your servant has confessed—

Don John. My servant! right, my servant! the very thing I guessed. Fy, fy, Don Pedro! is't from a servant's mouth a friend condemns a friend? or can servants always judge at what their masters' outward actions point? But some allowances I should make for the wild agitations you must needs be in. I'm therefore calm, and thus far pass all by.

Don Ped. If you are innocent, Heaven be my aid, that I may find you so. But still—

Don John. But still you wrong me, if you still suspect. Hear then, in short, my part of this adventure. In order to acquit myself of the charge you laid upon me in your absence, I went last night, just as 'twas dark, to view the several approaches to the house where you had left your wife; and I observed not far from one of the back doors two persons in close eager conference. I was disguised, so ventured to pass near 'em, and by a word or two I heard, I found 'twas Guzman talking to Jacinta. My concern for your honour made me at first resolve to call him to an immediate account. But then reflecting that I might possibly o'erhear some part of their discourse, and by that judge of Leonora's thoughts, I reined my passion in; and by the help of an advancing buttress, which kept me from their sight, I learned the black conspiracy. Don Guzman said, he had great complaint to make; and since his honourable love had been so ill returned, he could with ease forgive himself, if by some rougher means he should procure what prayers, and tears, and sighs had urged in vain.

Don Ped. Go on.

Don John. His kind assistant closed smoothly with him, and informed him with what ease that very night she'd introduce him to her chamber. At last they parted, with this agreement, that at some overture in a wall, he should expect her to inform him when Leonora was in bed, and all the coast was clear.

Don Ped. Despatch the rest.—[*Aside.*] Is't possible after all he should be innocent!

Don John. I must confess the resolution taken made me tremble for you. How to prevent it now and for ever was my next care. I immediately ordered Lopez to go lie at Don Felix's and to open me the door when all the family were in bed. He did as I directed him. I entered, and in the dark found my way to Leonora's apartment; I found the door open, at which I was surprised. I thought I heard some stirring in her chamber, and in an instant heard her cry to aid. At this I drew, and rushed into the room; which Guzman alarmed at, cried out to her assistance. His ready impudence, I must confess, at first quite struck me speechless; but in a moment I regained my tongue, and loud proclaimed the traitor.

Don Ped. Is't possible!

Don John. Yet more: your arrival hindering me at that time from taking vengeance for your wrong, I at this instant expect him here, to punish him (with heaven's righteous aid) for daring to attempt my ruin with the man, whose friendship I prefer to all the blessings Heaven and earth dispense. And now, Don Pedro, I have told you this, if still you have a mind to take my life, I shall defend it with the self-same warmth I intended to expose it in your service. [*Draws.*

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] If I did not know he was in love with Leonora, I could be easily surprised with what he has told me. But—but yet 'tis certain he has destroyed the proofs against him; and if I only hold him guilty as a lover, why must Don Guzman pass for innocent? Good Gods, I am again returning to my doubts!

Don John. [*Aside.*] I have at last reduced him to a balance,
But one lie more toss'd in will turn the scale.—
[*Aloud.*] One obligation more, my friend, you owe me;
I thought to have let it pass, but it shall out.
Know then,
I loved, like you, the beauteous Leonora;
But from the moment I observed how deep
Her dart had pierced you,
I tore my passion from my bleeding heart,
And sacrificed my happiness to yours.
Now I've no more to plead; if still you think
Your vengeance is my due, come pay it me.

Don Ped. Rather ten thousand poniards strike me dead.
O Alvarada!
Can you forgive a wild distracted friend?
Gods! whither was my jealous frenzy leading me?
Can you forget this barbarous injury?

Don John. I can: no more. But for the future, think me what I am, a faithful and a zealous friend. Retire, and leave me here. In a few moments I hope to bring you farther proofs on't. Guzman I instantly expect; leave me to do you justice on him.

Don Ped. That must not be. My revenge can ne'er be satisfied by any other hand but this.

Don John. Then let that do't. You'll in a moment have an opportunity.

Don Ped. You mistake, he won't be here.

Don John. How so?

Don Ped. He has not had your challenge. His sister intercepted it, and desired I'd come to prevent the quarrel.

Don John. What then is to be done?

Don Ped. I'll go and find him out immediately.

Don John. Very well: or hold—[*Aside.*] I must hinder 'em from talking, gossiping may discover me.—[*Aloud.*] Yes: let's go and find him: or, let me see—ay—'twill do better.

Don Ped. What?

Don John. Why—that the punishment should suit the crime.

Don Ped. Explain.

Don John. Attack him by his own laws of war. —'Twas in the night he would have had your honour, and in the night you ought to have his life.

Don Ped. His treason cannot take the guilt from mine.

Don John. There is no guilt in fair retaliation. When 'tis a point of honour founds the quarrel, the laws of swordmen must be kept, 'tis true: but if a thief glides in to seize my treasure, methinks I may return the favour on my dagger's point, as well as with my sword of ceremony six times as long.

Don Ped. Yet still the nobler method I would choose; it better satisfies the vengeance of a man of honour.

Don John. I own it, were you sure you should succeed: but the events of combats are uncertain. Your enemy may 'scape you: you perhaps may only wound him; you may be parted. Believe me, Pedro, the injury's too great for a punctilio satisfaction.

Don Ped. Well, guide me as you please, so you direct me quickly to my vengeance. What do you propose?

Don John. That which is easy, as 'tis just to execute. The wall he passed, to attempt your wife, let us get over to prevent his doing so any more. 'Twill let us in to a private apartment by his garden, where every evening in his amorous solitudes he spends some time alone, and where I guess his late fair scheme was drawn. The deed done, we can retreat the way we entered; let me be your pilot, 'tis now e'en dark, and the most proper time.

Don Ped. Lead on; I'll follow you.

Don John. [*Aside.*] How many villanies I'm forced to act, to keep one secret! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—DON GUZMAN'S *Apartment.*

DON GUZMAN *discovered sitting.*

Don Guz. With what rigour does this unfaithful woman treat me! Is't possible it can be she, who appeared to love me with so much tenderness? How little stress is to be laid upon a woman's heart? Sure they're not worth those anxious cares they give.—[*Rising.*] Then burst my chains, and give me room to search for nobler pleasures. I feel my heart begin to mutiny for liberty; there is a spirit in it yet, will struggle hard for freedom: but solitude's the worst of seconds.—Ho, Sancho! Galindo! who waits there? Bring some lights. Where are you?

Enter GALINDO, *rubbing his eyes, and drunk.*

Gal. I can't well tell. Do you want me, sir?

Don Guz. Yes, sir, I want you. Why am I left in the dark? what were you doing?

Gal. Doing, sir! I was doing—what one does when one sleeps, sir.

Don Guz. Have you no light without?

Gal. [*Yawning.*] Light!—No, sir,—I have no light. I am used to hardship. I can sleep in the dark.

Don Guz. You have been drinking, you rascal, you are drunk!

Gal. I have been drinking, sir, 'tis true, but I am not drunk. Every man that is drunk, has been drinking; confessed. But every man that has been drinking, is not drunk. Confess that too.

Don Guz. Who is't has put you in this condition, you sot?

Gal. A very honest fellow: Madam Leonora's coachman, nobody else. I have been making a little debauch with Madam Leonora's coachman; yes.

Don Guz. How came you to drink with him, beast?

Gal. Only *par complaisance*, sir. The coachman was to be drunk upon madam's wedding; and I being a friend, was desired to take part.

Don Guz. And so, you villain, you can make yourself merry with what renders me miserable!

Gal. No, sir, no; 'twas the coachman was merry: I drank with tears in my eyes. The remembrance of your misfortunes, made me so sad, so sad, that every cup I swallowed, was like a cup of poison to me.

Don Guz. Without doubt.

Gal. Yes; and to mortify myself upon melancholy matters, I believe I took down fifty. Yes.

Don Guz. Go fetch some lights, you drunken sot, you!

Gal. I will if I can find the door, that is to say. —The devil's in the door! I think 'tis grown too little for me.—[*Feeling for the door, and running against it.*] Shrunk this wet weather, I presume. [*Exit.*

Don Guz. Absence, the old remedy for love, must e'en be mine; to stay and brave the danger were presumption: Farewell, Valencia, then! and farewell, Leonora! And if thou canst, my heart, redeem thy liberty; secure it by a farewell eternal to her sex.

Re-enter GALINDO, *with a candle.*

Gal. Here's light, sir.—[*He falls and puts it out.*] So!

Don Guz. Well done! You sottish rascal, come no more in my sight. [*Exit into an adjoining chamber.*

Gal. These boards are so uneven!—You shall see now I shall neither find the candle—nor the candlestick; it shan't be for want of searching however.—[*Rising, and feeling about for the candle.*] O ho, have I got you! Enough, I'll look for your companion to-morrow.

Enter DON PEDRO *and* DON JOHN.

Don Ped. Where are we now?

Don John. We are in the apartment I told you of—softly—I hear something stir.—Ten to one but 'tis he.

Gal. Don't I hear somewhat?—No.—When one has wine in one's head, one has such a bustle in one's ears.

Don Ped. [*To* DON JOHN.] Who is that talking to himself?

Don John. 'Tis his servant, I know his voice, keep still.

Gal. Well; since my master has banished me his sight, I'll redeem by my obedience what I have lost by my debauch. I'll go sleep twelve hours in some melancholy hole where the devil shan't find me. Yes. [*Exit.*

Don John. He's gone; but hush, I hear somebody coming.

Don Guz. Ho, there! will nobody bring light? [*Behind the scene.*

Don Ped. 'Tis Guzman.

Don John. 'Tis so, prepare.

Don Ped. Shall I own my weakness? I feel an inward check; I wish this could be done some other way.

Don John. Distraction all! is this a time to balance? Think on the injury he would have done you, 'twill fortify your arm, and guide your dagger to his heart.

Don Ped. Enough, I'll hesitate no more; be satisfied, hark! he's coming.

Re-enter DON GUZMAN, *he crosses the stage.*

Don Guz. I think these rogues are resolved to leave me in the dark all night. [*Exit.*

Don John. Now's your time; follow him, and strike home.

Don Ped. To his heart, if my dagger will reach it. [*Exit.*

Don John. [*Aside.*] If one be killed, I'm satisfied; 'tis no great matter which.

Re-enter DON GUZMAN, DON PEDRO *following him, with his dagger ready to strike.*

Don Guz. My chamber-door's locked, and I think I hear somebody tread.—Who's there?—Nobody answers. But still I hear something stir. Holo there! Sancho, are you all drunk? Some lights here quickly.

[*Passes by the corner where* DON JOHN *stands, and goes off the stage;* DON PEDRO *following him.*

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] I think I'm near him now. —Traitor, take that! my wife has sent it thee. [*Stabs* DON JOHN.

Don John. Ah, I'm dead!

Don Ped. Then thou hast thy due.

Don John. I have indeed, 'tis I that have betrayed thee.

Don Ped. And 'tis I that am revenged on thee for doing it.

Don John. I would have forced thy wife.

Don Ped. Die then with the regret to have failed in thy attempt.

Don John. Farewell, if thou canst forgive me— [*Dies.*

Don Ped. I have done the deed: there's nothing left, but to make our escape. Don John, where are you? let's be gone, I hear the servants coming. [*Knocking at the door.*

Lop. [*Without.*] Open there quickly, open the door!

Don Ped. That's Lopez, we shall be discovered. But 'tis no great matter, the crime will justify the execution. But where's Don John?—Don John, where are you?

[*Knocking at the door.*

Lop. [*Without.*] Open the door there, quickly! —Madam, I saw 'em both pass the wall, the devil's in't if any good comes on't.

Leo. [*Without.*] I am frightened out of my senses!—Ho, Isabella!

Don Ped. 'Tis Leonora.—She's welcome.—With her own eyes let her see her Guzman dead.

Enter DON GUZMAN, LEONORA, ISABELLA, JACINTA, *and* LOPEZ, *with lights.*

Don Ped. Ha! what is't I see? Guzman alive? Then who art thou? [*Looking on* DON JOHN.

Don Guz. Guzman alive! Yes, Pedro, Guzman is alive.

Don Ped. Then Heaven is just, and there's a traitor dead.

Isab. [*Weeping.*] Alas, Don John!

Lop. [*Looking upon* DON JOHN.] Buenas noches!

Don Guz. What has produced this bloody scene?

Don Ped. 'Tis I have been the actor in't; my poniard, Guzman, I intended in your heart. I thought your crime deserved it: but I did you wrong, and my hand in searching the innocent, has by heaven's justice been directed to the guilty. Don John, with his last breath, confessed himself the offender. Thus my revenge is satisfied, and you are cleared.

Don Guz. Good Heaven, how equitable are thy judgments!

Don Ped. [*To* LEONORA.] Come, madam, my honour now is satisfied, and if you please my love may be so too.

Leo. If it is not,
You to yourself alone shall own your smart,
For where I've given my hand, I'll give my heart. [*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. OLDFIELD.

WHAT say you, sirs, d'ye think my lady'll 'scape?
'Tis devilish hard to stand a favourite's rape.
Should Guzman, like Don John, break in upon her,
For all her virtue, heaven have mercy on her!
Her strength, I doubt, 's in his irresolution,
There's wondrous charms in vigorous execution.
Indeed you men are fools, you won't believe
What dreadful things we women can forgive:
I know but one we never do pass by,
And that you plague us with eternally;
When in your courtly fears to disoblige,
You won't attack the town which you besiege:
Your guns are light, and planted out of reach:
D'ye think with billets-doux to make a breach?
'Tis small-shot all, and not a stone will fly:
Walls fall by cannon, and by firing nigh:
In sluggish dull blockades you keep the field,
And starve us ere we can with honour yield.
In short—
We can't receive those terms you gently tender,
But storm, and we can answer our surrender.

THE CONFEDERACY.

A Comedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GRIPE, MONEYTRAP, } *two rich Money Scriveners.*
DICK AMLET, *a Gamester, Son to* MRS. AMLET.
BRASS, *his Companion, passes for his Valet-de-Chambre.*
CLIP, *a Goldsmith.*
JESSAMIN, *Footboy to* CLARISSA.
A Constable.
CLARISSA, *Wife to* GRIPE, *an expensive luxurious Woman, a great Admirer of Quality.*
ARAMINTA, *Wife to* MONEYTRAP, *very intimate with* CLARISSA, *of the same Humour.*
CORINNA, *Daughter to* GRIPE *by a former Wife, a good Fortune, young, and kept very close by her Father.*
FLIPPANTA, *Maid to* CLARISSA.
MRS. AMLET, *a Seller of all Sorts of private Affairs to the Ladies.*
MRS. CLOGGIT, *her Neighbour.*

SCENE,—LONDON.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY A SHABBY POET.

YE gods! what crime had my poor father done,
That you should make a poet of his son?
Or is't for some great services of his,
Y'are pleased to compliment his boy—with this?
[*Showing his crown of laurel.*
The honour, I must needs confess, is great,
If, with his crown, you'd tell him where to eat.
'Tis well.—But I have more complaints—look here!
[*Showing his ragged coat.*
Hark ye:—D'ye think this suit good winter wear?
In a cold morning, whu—at a lord's gate,
How you have let the porter let me wait!
You'll say, perhaps, you knew I'd get no harm,
You'd given me fire enough to keep me warm.
Ah!—
A world of blessings to that fire we owe;
Without it I'd ne'er made this princely show.
I have a brother too, now in my sight,
[*Looking behind the scenes.*
A busy man amongst us here to-night:
Your fire has made him play a thousand pranks,
For which, no doubt, you've had his daily thanks;
He has thank'd you, first, for all his decent plays,
Where he so nick'd it, when he writ for praise.
Next for his meddling with some folks in black,
And bringing—souse!—a priest upon his back;
For building houses here to oblige the peers,
And fetching all their house about his ears;
For a new play, he'as now thought fit to write,
To soothe the town—which they—will damn to-night.
These benefits are such, no man can doubt
But he'll go on, and set your fancy out,
Till for reward of all his noble deeds,
At last like other sprightly folks he speeds:
Has this great recompense fix'd on his brow
At famed Parnassus; has your leave to bow
And walk about the streets—equipp'd—as I am now.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Covent Garden.*

Enter MRS. AMLET *and* MRS. CLOGGIT, *meeting.*

Mrs. Aml. Good-morrow, neighbour; good-morrow, neighbour Cloggit! How does all at your house this morning?

Mrs. Clog. Thank you kindly, Mrs. Amlet, thank you kindly; how do you do, I pray?

Mrs. Aml. At the old rate, neighbour, poor and honest; these are hard times, good lack!

Mrs. Clog. If they are hard with you, what are they with us? You have a good trade going, all the great folks in town help you off with your merchandise.

Mrs. Aml. Yes, they do help us off with 'em indeed; they buy all.

Mrs. Clog. And pay—

Mrs. Aml. For some.

Mrs. Clog. Well, 'tis a thousand pities, Mrs. Amlet, they are not as ready at one as they are at

t'other: for, not to wrong 'em, they give very good rates.

Mrs. Aml. Oh, for that, let us do 'em justice, neighbour; they never make two words upon the price, all they haggle about is the day of payment.

Mrs. Clog. There's all the dispute, as you say.

Mrs. Aml. But that's a wicked one. For my part, neighbour, I'm just tired off my legs with trotting after 'em; besides, it eats out all our profit. Would you believe it, Mrs. Cloggit, I have worn out four pair of pattens with following my old lady Youthful, for one set of false teeth, and but three pots of paint.

Mrs. Clog. Look you there now!

Mrs. Aml. If they would but once let me get enough by 'em, to keep a coach to carry me a-dunning after 'em, there would be some conscience in it.

Mrs. Clog. Ay, that were something. But now you talk of conscience, Mrs. Amlet, how do you speed amongst your city customers?

Mrs. Aml. My city customers! now by my truth, neighbour, between the city and the court (with reverence be it spoken) there's not a—to choose. My ladies in the city, in times past, were as full of gold as they were of religion, and as punctual in their payments as they were in their prayers; but since they have set their minds upon quality, adieu one, adieu t'other, their money and their consciences are gone, Heaven knows where. There is not a goldsmith's wife to be found in town, but's as hard-hearted as an ancient judge, and as poor as a towering duchess.

Mrs. Clog. But what the murrain have they to do with quality! why don't their husbands make 'em mind their shops?

Mrs. Aml. Their husbands! their husbands, sayest thou, woman? Alack! alack! they mind their husbands, neighbour, no more than they do a sermon.

Mrs. Clog. Good lack a-day, that women born of sober parents, should be prone to follow ill examples! But now we talk of quality, when did you hear of your son Richard, Mrs. Amlet? My daughter Flipp says she met him t'other day in a laced coat, with three fine ladies, his footman at his heels, and as gay as a bridegroom.

Mrs. Aml. Is it possible? Ah the rogue! Well, neighbour, all's well that ends well; but Dick will be hanged.

Mrs. Clog. That were pity.

Mrs. Aml. Pity indeed; for he's a hopeful young man to look on; but he leads a life—Well—where he has it, Heaven knows; but they say, he pays his club with the best of 'em. I have seen him but once these three months, neighbour, and then the varlet wanted money; but I bid him march, and march he did to some purpose; for in less than an hour back comes my gentleman into the house, walks to and fro in the room, with his wig over his shoulder, his hat on one side, whistling a minuet, and tossing a purse of gold from one hand to t'other, with no more respect (Heaven bless us!) than if it had been an orange. Sirrah, says I, where have you got that? He answers me never a word, but sets his arms akimbo, cocks his saucy hat in my face, turns about upon his ungracious heel, as much as to say kiss—and I've never set eye on him since.

Mrs. Clog. Look you there now; to see what the youth of this age are come to!

Mrs. Aml. See what they will come to, neighbour. Heaven shield, I say; but Dick's upon the gallop. Well, I must bid you good-morrow; I'm going where I doubt I shall meet but a sorry welcome.

Mrs. Clog. To get in some old debt, I'll warrant you?

Mrs. Aml. Neither better nor worse.

Mrs. Clog. From a lady of quality?

Mrs. Aml. No, she's but a scrivener's wife; but she lives as well and pays as ill as the stateliest countess of 'em all. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*The Street before* GRIPE's *House.*

Enter BRASS.

Brass. Well, surely through the world's wide extent, there never appeared so impudent a fellow as my school-fellow Dick.—Pass himself upon the town for a gentleman, drop into all the best company with an easy air, as if his natural element were in the sphere of quality; when the rogue had a kettle-drum to his father, who was hanged for robbing a church, and has a pedlar to his mother,—who carries her shop under her arm!—But here he comes.

Enter DICK AMLET.

Dick. Well, Brass, what news? Hast thou given my letter to Flippanta?

Brass. I'm but just come; I han't knocked at the door yet. But I have a damned piece of news for you.

Dick. As how?

Brass. We must quit this country.

Dick. We'll be hanged first.

Brass. So you will if you stay.

Dick. Why, what's the matter?

Brass. There's a storm a coming.

Dick. From whence?

Brass. From the worst point in the compass, the law.

Dick. The law! why what have I to do with the law?

Brass. Nothing; and therefore it has something to do with you.

Dick. Explain.

Brass. You know you cheated a young fellow at picquet t'other day of the money he had to raise his company.

Dick. Well, what then?

Brass. Why, he's sorry he lost it.

Dick. Who doubts that?

Brass. Ay, but that is not all, he's such a fool to think of complaining on't.

Dick. Then I must be so wise to stop his mouth.

Brass. How?

Dick. Give him a little back; if that won't do, strangle him.

Brass. You are very quick in your methods.

Dick. Men must be so that will despatch business.

Brass. Hark you, colonel, your father died in's bed?

Dick. He might have done, if he had not been a fool.

Brass. Why, he robbed a church.

Dick. Ay, but he forgot to make sure of the sexton.

Brass. Are not you a great rogue?

Dick. Or I should wear worse clothes.

Brass. Hark you, I would advise you to change your life.

Dick. And turn ballad-singer?

Brass. Not so neither.

Dick. What then.

Brass. Why, if you can get this young wench, reform, and live honest.

Dick. That's the way to be starved.

Brass. No, she has money enough to buy you a good place, and pay me into the bargain for helping her to so good a match. You have but this throw left to save you, for you are not ignorant, youngster, that your morals begin to be pretty well known about town; have a care your noble birth and your honourable relations are not discovered too; there needs but that to have you tossed in a blanket, for the entertainment of the first company of ladies you intrude into; and then, like a dutiful son, you may daggle about with your mother, and sell paint: she's old and weak, and wants somebody to carry her goods after her. How like a dog will you look, with a pair of plod shoes, your hair cropped up to your ears, and a bandbox under your arm!

Dick. Why faith, Brass, I think thou art in the right on't; I must fix my affairs quickly, or madam Fortune will be playing some of her bitch-tricks with me: therefore I'll tell thee what we'll do; we'll pursue this old rogue's daughter heartily; we'll cheat his family to purpose, and they shall atone for the rest of mankind.

Brass. Have at her then! I'll about your business presently.

Dick. One kiss—and success attend thee. [*Exit.*

Brass. A great rogue!—Well, I say nothing: but when I have got the thing into a good posture, he shall sign and seal, or I'll have him tumbled out of the house like a cheese.—Now for Flippanta.

[*Knocks at* GRIPE'S *door.*

Enter FLIPPANTA.

Flip. Who's that? Brass!

Brass. Flippanta!

Flip. What want you, rogue's face?

Brass. Is your mistress dressed?

Flip. What, already! Is the fellow drunk?

Brass. Why, with respect to her looking-glass, it's almost two.

Flip. What then, fool?

Brass. Why then it's time for the mistress of the house to come down, and look after her family.

Flip. Prithee don't be an owl. Those that go to bed at night may rise in the morning! we that go to bed in the morning rise in the afternoon.

Brass. When does she make her visits then?

Flip. By candle-light; it helps off a muddy complexion; we women hate inquisitive sunshine. But do you know that my lady is going to turn good housewife?

Brass. What, is she going to die?

Flip. Die!

Brass. Why, that's the only way to save money for her family.

Flip. No; but she has thought of a project to save chair-hire.

Brass. As how?

Flip. Why all the company she used to keep abroad, she now intends shall meet at her own house. Your master has advised her to set up a basset-table.

Brass. Nay, if he advised her to 't, it's right; but has she acquainted her husband with it yet?

Flip. What to do? when the company meet, he'll see 'em.

Brass. Nay, that's true, as you say; he'll know it soon enough.

Flip. Well, I must be gone; have you any business with my lady?

Brass. Yes; as ambassador from Araminta, I have a letter for her.

Flip. Give it me.

Brass. Hold!—and as first minister of state to the colonel, I have an affair to communicate to thee.

Flip. What is't?—quick!

Brass. Why—he's in love.

Flip. With what?

Brass. A woman—and her money together.

Flip. Who is she?

Brass. Corinna.

Flip. What would he be at?

Brass. At her, if she's at leisure.

Flip. Which way?

Brass. Honourably. He has ordered me to demand her of thee in marriage.

Flip. Of me!

Brass. Why, when a man of quality has a mind to a city fortune, wouldst have him apply to her father and mother?

Flip. No.

Brass. No; so I think. Men of our end of the town are better bred than to use ceremony. With a long periwig we strike the lady; with a you-know-what we soften the maid; and when the parson has done his job, we open the affair to the family. Will you slip this letter into her Prayer-Book, my little queen? it's a very passionate one. It's sealed with a heart and a dagger; you may see by that what he intends to do with himself.

Flip. Are there any verses in it? if not, I won't touch it.

Brass. Not one word in prose; it's dated in rhyme. [FLIPPANTA *takes the letter.*

Flip. Well, but have you brought nothing else?

Brass. Gad forgive me, I'm the forgetfullest dog!—I have a letter for you too;—here, 'tis in a purse, but it's in prose; you won't touch it.

Flip. Yes, hang it, it is not good to be too dainty.

Brass. How useful a virtue is humility!—Well, child, we shall have an answer to-morrow, shan't we?

Flip. I can't promise you that; for our young gentlewoman is not so often in my way as she would be. Her father (who is a citizen from the foot to the forehead of him) lets her seldom converse with her mother-in-law and me, for fear she should learn the airs of a woman of quality. But I'll take the first occasion.—See, there's my lady; go in and deliver your letter to her. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in the same.*

Enter CLARISSA, *followed by* FLIPPANTA *and* BRASS.

Clar. No messages this morning from anybody, Flippanta? Lard, how dull that is! Oh, there's Brass!—I did not see thee, Brass. What news dost thou bring?

Brass. Only a letter from Araminta, madam.

Clar. Give it me.—Open it for me, Flippanta, I am so lazy to-day. [*Sitting down.*

Brass. [*Aside to* FLIPPANTA.] Be sure now you deliver my master's as carefully as I do this.

Flip. Don't trouble thyself, I'm no novice.

Clar. [*To* BRASS.] 'Tis well; there needs no answer, since she'll be here so soon.

Brass. Your ladyship has no farther commands then?

Clar. Not at this time, honest Brass.—[*Exit* BRASS.] Flippanta!

Flip. Madam.

Clar. My husband's in love.

Flip. In love!

Clar. With Araminta.

Flip. Impossible!

Clar. This letter from her is to give me an account of it.

Flip. Methinks you are not very much alarmed.

Clar. No; thou knowest I'm not much tortured with jealousy.

Flip. Nay, you are much in the right on't, madam, for jealousy's a city passion; 'tis a thing unknown amongst people of quality.

Clar. Fy! a woman must indeed be of a mechanic mould who is either troubled or pleased with anything her husband can do to her. Prithee mention him no more; 'tis the dullest theme.

Flip. 'Tis splenetic indeed. But when once you open your basset-table, I hope that will put him out of your head.

Clar. Alas, Flippanta! I begin to grow weary even of the thoughts of that too.

Flip. How so?

Clar. Why, I have thought on't a day and a night already; and four-and-twenty hours, thou knowest, is enough to make one weary of anything.

Flip. Now, by my conscience, you have more woman in you than all your sex together: you never know what you would have.

Clar. Thou mistakest the thing quite. I always know what I lack, but I am never pleased with what I have. The want of a thing is perplexing enough, but the possession of it is intolerable.

Flip. Well, I don't know what you are made of, but other women would think themselves blest in your case; handsome, witty, loved by everybody, and of so happy a composure to care a fig for nobody. You have no one passion but that of your pleasures; and you have in me a servant devoted to all your desires, let 'em be as extravagant as they will. Yet all this is nothing; you can still be out of humour.

Clar. Alas! I have but too much cause.

Flip. Why, what have you to complain of?

Clar. Alas! I have more subjects for spleen than one. Is it not a most horrible thing that I should be but a scrivener's wife? Come, don't flatter me; don't you think nature designed me for something *plus élevée*?

Flip. Nay, that's certain; but on t'other side, methinks, you ought to be in some measure content, since you live like a woman of quality, though you are none.

Clar. O fy! the very quintessence of it is wanting.

Flip. What's that?

Clar. Why, I dare abuse nobody: I'm afraid to affront people, though I don't like their faces; or to ruin their reputations, though they pique me to it by taking ever so much pains to preserve 'em: I dare not raise a lie of a man, though he neglects to make love to me; nor report a woman to be a fool, though she's handsomer than I am. In short, I dare not so much as bid my footman kick the people out of doors, though they come to ask me for what I owe 'em.

Flip. All this is very hard indeed.

Clar. Ah, Flippanta, the perquisites of quality are of an unspeakable value!

Flip. They are of some use, I must confess; but we must not expect to have everything. You have wit and beauty, and a fool to your husband: come, come, madam, that's a good portion for one.

Clar. Alas! what signifies beauty and wit, when one dares neither jilt the men nor abuse the women? 'Tis a sad thing, Flippanta, when wit's confined; 'tis worse than the rising of the lights. I have been sometimes almost choked with scandal, and durst not cough it up for want of being a countess.

Flip. Poor lady!

Clar. Oh! liberty is a fine thing, Flippanta; it's a great help in conversation to have leave to say what one will. I have seen a woman of quality, who has not had one grain of wit, entertain a whole company the most agreeably in the world, only with her malice. But 'tis in vain to repine; I can't mend my condition till my husband dies; so I'll say no more on't, but think of making the most of the state I am in.

Flip. That's your best way, madam; and in order to it, pray consider how you'll get some ready money to set your basset-table a-going; for that's necessary.

Clar. Thou sayest true; but what trick I shall play my husband to get some I don't know: for my pretence of losing my diamond necklace has put the man into such a passion, I'm afraid he won't hear reason.

Flip. No matter; he begins to think 'tis lost in earnest: so I fancy you may venture to sell it, and raise money that way.

Clar. That can't be, for he has left odious notes with all the goldsmiths in town.

Flip. Well, we must pawn it then.

Clar. I'm quite tired with dealing with those pawnbrokers.

Flip. [*Aside.*] I'm afraid you'll continue the trade a great while, for all that.

Enter JESSAMIN.

Jes. Madam, there's the woman below that sells paint and patches, iron-bodice, false teeth, and all sorts of things to the ladies; I can't think of her name. [*Exit.*

Flip. 'Tis Mrs. Amlet; she wants money.

Clar. Well, I han't enough for myself, it's an unreasonable thing she should think I have any for her.

Flip. She's a troublesome jade.

Clar. So are all people that come a-dunning.

Flip. What will you do with her?

Clar. I have just now thought on't. She's very rich, that woman is, Flippanta; I'll borrow some money of her.

Flip. Borrow! sure you jest, madam.

Clar. No, I'm in earnest; I give thee commission to do it for me.

Flip. Me!

Clar. Why dost thou stare, and look so ungainly? don't I speak to be understood?

Flip. Yes, I understand you well enough; but Mrs. Amlet—

Clar. But Mrs. Amlet must lend me some money; where shall I have any to pay her else?

Flip. That's true; I never thought of that truly. But here she is.

Enter MRS. AMLET.

Clar. How d'you do? how d'you do, Mrs. Amlet; I han't seen you these thousand years, and yet I believe I'm down in your books.

Mrs. Aml. Oh, madam, I don't come for that, alack!

Flip. Good-morrow, Mrs. Amlet.

Mrs. Aml. Good-morrow, Mrs. Flippanta.

Clar. How much am I indebted to you, Mrs. Amlet?

Mrs. Aml. Nay, if your ladyship desires to see your bill, I believe I may have it about me.—There, madam, if it ben't too much fatigue to you to look it over.

Clar. Let me see it, for I hate to be in debt—[*Aside*]—where I am obliged to pay.—[*Reads.*] Imprimis, *For bolstering out the Countess of Crump's left hip*—Oh, fy! this does not belong to me.

Mrs. Aml. I beg your ladyship's pardon. I mistook, indeed; 'tis a countess's bill I have writ out to little purpose. I furnished her two years ago with three pair of hips, and am not paid for 'em yet.—But some are better customers than some.—There's your ladyship's bill, madam.

Clar. [Reads.] *For the idea of a new-invented commode.*—Ay, this may be mine, but 'tis of a preposterous length. Do you think I can waste time to read every article, Mrs. Amlet? I'd as lief read a sermon.

Mrs. Aml. Alack-a-day, there's no need of fatiguing yourself at that rate; cast an eye only, if your honour pleases, upon the sum total.

Clar. Total; fifty-six pound—and odd things.

Flip. But six-and-fifty pound!

Mrs. Aml. Nay, another body would have made it twice as much; but there's a blessing goes along with a moderate profit.

Clar. Flippanta, go to my cashier, let him give you six-and-fifty pound. Make haste: don't you hear me? six-and-fifty pound. Is it so difficult to be comprehended?

Flip. No, madam, I—I comprehend six-and-fifty pound, but—

Clar. But go and fetch it then.

Flip. [*Aside.*] What she means I don't know; but I shall, I suppose, before I bring her the money. [*Exit.*

Clar. [*Setting her hair in a pocket-glass.*] The trade you follow gives you a great deal of trouble, Mrs. Amlet?

Mrs. Aml. Alack-a-day, a world of pain, madam, and yet there's small profit, as your honour sees by your bill.

Clar. Poor woman! Sometimes you have great losses, Mrs. Amlet?

Mrs. Aml. I have two thousand pounds owing me, of which I shall never get ten shillings.

Clar. Poor woman! You have a great charge of children, Mrs. Amlet?

Mrs. Aml. Only one wicked rogue, madam, who, I think, will break my heart.

Clar. Poor woman!

Mrs. Aml. He'll be hanged, madam—that will be the end of him. Where he gets it, Heaven knows; but he's always shaking his heels with the ladies, and his elbows with the lords. He's as fine as a prince, and as gim as the best of them; but the ungracious rogue tells all he comes near that his mother is dead, and I am but his nurse.

Clar. Poor woman!

Mrs. Aml. Alas, madam, he's like the rest of the world; everybody's for appearing to be more than they are, and that ruins all.

Clar. Well, Mrs. Amlet, you'll excuse me, I have a little business, Flippanta will bring you your money presently. Adieu, Mrs. Amlet!

Mrs. Aml. I return your honour many thanks.—[*Exit* CLARISSA.] Ah, there's my good lady, not so much as read her bill. If the rest were like her, I should soon have money enough to go as fine as Dick himself.

Enter DICK AMLET.

Dick. Sure Flippanta must have given my letter by this time; I long to know how it has been received.

Mrs. Aml. Misericorde! what do I see!

Dick. [*Aside.*] Fiends and hags—the witch my mother!

Mrs. Aml. Nay, 'tis he; ah, my poor Dick, what art thou doing here?

Dick. [*Aside.*] What a misfortune!

Mrs. Aml. Good Lard! how thou art bravely decked. But it's all one, I am thy mother still; and though thou art a wicked child, nature will speak, I love thee still, ah, Dick! my poor Dick! [*Embracing him.*

Dick. Blood and thunder! will you ruin me? [*Breaking from her.*

Mrs. Aml. Ah, the blasphemous rogue, how he swears!

Dick. You destroy all my hopes.

Mrs. Aml. Will your mother's kiss destroy you, varlet? Thou art an ungracious bird; kneel down, and ask me blessing, sirrah.

Dick. Death and furies!

Mrs. Aml. Ah, he's a proper young man; see what a shape he has! ah, poor child! [*Running to embrace him, he still avoiding her.*

Dick. Oons, keep off! the woman's mad. If anybody comes, my fortune's lost.

Mrs. Aml. What fortune, ha? speak, graceless! Ah Dick, thou'lt be hanged, Dick!

Dick. Good dear mother now, don't call me Dick here.

Mrs. Aml. Not call thee Dick! is it not thy name? What shall I call thee? Mr. Amlet? ha! Art not thou a presumptuous rascal? Hark you, sirrah, I hear of your tricks; you disown me for

your mother, and say I am but your nurse. Is not this true?

Dick. No, I love you; I respect you;—[*Taking her hand.*] I am all duty. But if you discover me here, you ruin the fairest prospect that man ever had.

Mrs. Aml. What prospect? ha! Come, this is a lie now.

Dick. No, my honoured parent; what I say is true, I'm about a great fortune. I'll bring you home a daughter-in-law, in a coach and six horses, if you'll but be quiet: I can't tell you more now.

Mrs. Aml. Is it possible!

Dick. 'Tis true, by Jupiter!

Mrs. Aml. My dear lad!—

Dick. For heaven's sake!—

Mrs. Aml. But tell me, Dick—

Dick. I'll follow you home in a moment, and tell you all.

Mrs. Aml. What a shape is there!

Dick. Pray mother go.

Mrs. Aml. I must receive some money here first, which shall go for thy wedding-dinner.

Dick. Here's somebody coming.—[*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, she'll betray me!

[*He makes signs to his mother.*

Re-enter FLIPPANTA.

Dick. Good-morrow, dear Flippanta: how do all the ladies within?

Flip. At your service, colonel; as far at least as my interest goes.

Mrs. Aml. Colonel!—Law you now, how Dick's respected! [*Aside.*

Dick. Waiting for thee, Flippanta, I was making acquaintance with this old gentlewoman here.

Mrs. Aml. The pretty lad! he's as impudent as a page. [*Aside.*

Dick. Who is this good woman, Flippanta?

Flip. A gin of all trades; an old daggling cheat, that hobbles about from house to house to bubble the ladies of their money. I have a small business of yours in my pocket, colonel.

Dick. An answer to my letter?

Flip. So quick indeed! No, it's your letter itself.

Dick. Hast thou not given it then yet?

Flip. I han't had an opportunity; but 'twon't be long first. Won't you go in and see my lady?

Dick. Yes, I'll go make her a short visit. But dear Flippanta, don't forget: my life and fortune are in your hands.

Flip. Ne'er fear, I'll take care of 'em.

Mrs. Aml. How he traps 'em! let Dick alone. [*Aside.*

Dick. [*To* Mrs. AMLET.] Your servant, good madam.

Mrs. Aml. Your honour's most devoted.—[*Exit* DICK AMLET.] A pretty, civil, well-bred gentleman this, Mrs. Flippanta. Pray whom may he be?

Flip. A man of great note; Colonel Shapely.

Mrs. Aml. Is it possible! I have heard much of him indeed, but never saw him before. One may see quality in every limb of him: he's a fine man truly.

Flip. I think you are in love with him, Mrs. Amlet.

Mrs. Aml. Alas, those days are done with me, but if I were as fair as I was once, and had as much money as some folks, Colonel Shapely should not catch cold for want of a bedfellow. I love your men of rank, they have something in their air does so distinguish 'em from the rascality.

Flip. People of quality are fine things indeed, Mrs. Amlet, if they had but a little more money; but for want of that, they are forced to do things their great souls are ashamed of. For example—here's my lady—she owes you but six-and-fifty pounds—

Mrs. Aml. Well!

Flip. Well, and she has it not by her to pay you.

Mrs. Aml. How can that be?

Flip. I don't know; her cash-keeper's out of humour, he says he has no money.

Mrs. Aml. What a presumptuous piece of vermin is a cash-keeper! Tell his lady he has no money!—Now, Mrs. Flippanta, you may see his bags are full, by his being so saucy.

Flip. If they are, there's no help for't; he'll do what he pleases, till he comes to make up his yearly accounts.

Mrs. Aml. But madam plays sometimes, so when she has good fortune, she may pay me out of her winnings.

Flip. Oh, ne'er think of that, Mrs. Amlet; if she had won a thousand pounds, she'd rather die in a jail than pay off a farthing with it. Play-money, Mrs. Amlet, amongst people of quality, is a sacred thing, and not to be profaned. The deuse!—'tis consecrated to their pleasures, 'twould be sacrilege to pay their debts with it.

Mrs. Aml. Why what shall we do then? for I han't one penny to buy bread.

Flip. I'll tell you—it just now comes in my head: I know my lady has a little occasion for money at this time; so—if you lend her—a hundred pound—do you see, then she may pay you your six-and-fifty out of it.

Mrs. Aml. Sure, Mrs. Flippanta, you think to make a fool of me!

Flip. No, the devil fetch me if I do.—You shall have a diamond necklace in pawn.

Mrs. Aml. O ho, a pawn! That's another case. And when must she have this money?

Flip. In a quarter of an hour.

Mrs. Aml. Say no more. Bring the necklace to my house, it shall be ready for you.

Flip. I'll be with you in a moment.

Mrs. Aml. Adieu, Mrs. Flippanta.

Flip. Adieu, Mrs. Amlet.—[*Exit* Mrs. AMLET.] So—this ready money will make us all happy. This spring will set our basset going, and that's a wheel will turn twenty others. My lady's young and handsome; she'll have a dozen intrigues upon her hands before she has been twice at her prayers. So much the better; the more the grist, the richer the miller. Sure never wench got into so hopeful a place! Here's a fortune to be sold, a mistress to be debauched, and a master to be ruined. If I don't feather my nest, and get a good husband, I deserve to die, both a maid and a beggar. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* GRIPE'S *House.*

Enter CLARISSA *and* DICK AMLET.

Clar. What in the name of dulness is the matter with you, colonel? You are as studious as a cracked chemist.

Dick. My head, madam, is full of your husband.

Clar. The worst furniture for a head in the universe.

Dick. I am thinking of his passion for your friend Araminta.

Clar. Passion!—dear colonel, give it a less violent name.

Enter BRASS.

Dick. Well, sir, what want you?

Brass. [*Aside to* DICK AMLET.] The affair I told you of goes ill.—There's an action out.

Dick. The devil there is!

Clar. What news brings Brass?

Dick. Before Gad I can't tell, madam; the dog will never speak out.—[*To* BRASS.] My lord what d'ye call him waits for me at my lodging: is not that it?

Brass. Yes, sir.

Dick. Madam, I ask your pardon.

Clar. Your servant, sir.—[*Exeunt* DICK AMLET *and* BRASS.] Jessamin! [*She sits down.*

Enter JESSAMIN.

Jes. Madam!

Clar. Where's Corinna? Call her to me, if her father han't locked her up; I want her company.

Jes. Madam, her guitar-master is with her. [*Exit.*

Clar. Psha! she's taken up with her impertinent guitar man. Flippanta stays an age with that old fool Mrs. Amlet. And Araminta, before she can come abroad, is so long a-placing her coquette-patch, that I must be a year without company. How insupportable is a moment's uneasiness to a woman of spirit and pleasure!

Enter FLIPPANTA.

Oh, art thou come at last? Prithee, Flippanta, learn to move a little quicker, thou knowest how impatient I am.

Flip. Yes, when you expect money. If you had sent me to buy a prayer-book, you'd have thought I had flown.

Clar. Well, hast thou brought me any, after all?

Flip. Yes, I have brought some. There—[*Giving her a purse.*] The old hag has struck off her bill, the rest is in that purse.

Clar. 'Tis well; but take care, Flippanta, my husband don't suspect anything of this; 'twould vex him, and I don't love to make him uneasy: so I would spare him these little sort of troubles, by keeping 'em from his knowledge.

Flip. See the tenderness she has for him! and yet he's always complaining of you.

Clar. 'Tis the nature of 'em, Flippanta; a husband is a growling animal.

Flip. How exactly you define 'em!

Clar. I know 'em, Flippanta; though I confess my poor wretch diverts me sometimes with his ill humours. I wish he would quarrel with me to-day a little, to pass away the time, for I find myself in a violent spleen.

Flip. Why, if you please to drop yourself in his way, six to four but he scolds one rubbers with you.

Clar. Ay, but thou knowest he's as uncertain as the wind, and if instead of quarrelling with me, he should chance to be fond, he'd make me as sick as a dog.

Flip. If he's kind, you must provoke him; if he kisses you, spit in his face.

Clar. Alas! when men are in the kissing fit, (like lapdogs,) they take that for a favour.

Flip. Nay, then I don't know what you'll do with him.

Clar. I'll e'en do nothing at all with him—Flippanta. [*Yawning.*

Flip. Madam!

Clar. My hoods and scarf, and a coach to the door.

Flip. Why, whither are you going?

Clar. I can't tell yet, but I would go spend some money, since I have it.

Flip. Why, you want nothing that I know of.

Clar. How awkward an objection now is that! as if a woman of education bought things because she wanted 'em. Quality always distinguishes itself, and therefore as the mechanic people buy things, because they have occasion for 'em, you see women of rank always buy things, because they have not occasion for 'em. Now there, Flippanta, you see the difference between a woman that has breeding, and one that has none. O ho, here's Araminta come at last.

Enter ARAMINTA.

Lard, what a tedious while you have let me expect you! I was afraid you were not well; how d'ye do to-day?

Aram As well as a woman can do, that has not slept all night.

Flip. Methinks, madam, you are pretty well awake, however.

Aram. Oh, 'tis not a little thing will make a woman of my vigour look drowsy.

Clar. But prithee what was't disturbed you?

Aram. Not your husband, don't trouble yourself; at least, I am not in love with him yet.

Clar. Well remembered, I had quite forgot that matter. I wish you much joy, you have made a noble conquest indeed.

Aram. But now I have subdued the country, pray is it worth my keeping? You know the ground, you have tried it.

Clar. A barren soil, Heaven can tell.

Aram. Yet if it were well cultivated, it would produce something to my knowledge. Do you know it is in my power to ruin this poor thing of yours? His whole estate is at my service.

Flip. Cods-fish! strike him, madam, and let my

lady go your halves. There's no sin in plundering a husband, so his wife has share of the booty.

Aram. Whenever she gives me her orders, I shall be very ready to obey 'em.

Clar. Why, as odd a thing as such a project may seem, Araminta, I believe I shall have a little serious discourse with you about it. But, prithee, tell me how you have passed the night? for I am sure your mind has been roving upon some pretty thing or other.

Aram. Why, I have been studying all the ways my brain could produce to plague my husband.

Clar. No wonder indeed you look so fresh this morning, after the satisfaction of such pleasing ideas all night.

Aram. Why, can a woman do less than study mischief, when she has tumbled and tossed herself into a burning fever for want of sleep, and sees a fellow lie snoring by her, stock-still, in a fine breathing sweat?

Clar. Now see the difference of women's tempers! If my dear would make but one nap of his whole life, and only waken to make his will, I should be the happiest wife in the universe. But we'll discourse more of these matters as we go, for I must take a tour among the shops.

Aram. I have a coach waits at the door, we'll talk of 'em as we rattle along.

Clar. The best place in nature; for you know a hackney-coach is a natural enemy to a husband.

[*Exeunt* CLARISSA *and* ARAMINTA.

Flip. What a pretty little pair of amiable persons are there gone to hold a council of war together! Poor birds! What would they do with their time, if the plaguing their husbands did not help 'em to employment! Well, if idleness be the root of all evil, then matrimony's good for something, for it sets many a poor woman to work. But here comes Miss. I hope I shall help her into the holy state too ere long. And when she's once there, if she don't play her part as well as the best of 'em, I'm mistaken. Han't I lost the letter I'm to give her?—No, here 'tis; so, now we shall see how pure nature will work with her, for art she knows none yet.

Enter CORINNA.

Cor. What does my mother-in-law want with me, Flippanta? They tell me she was asking for me.

Flip. She's just gone out, so I suppose 'twas no great business.

Cor. Then I'll go into my chamber again.

Flip. Nay, hold a little if you please. I have some business with you myself of more concern than what she had to say to you.

Cor. Make haste then, for you know my father won't let me keep you company; he says you'll spoil me.

Flip. I spoil you! He's an unworthy man to give you such ill impressions of a woman of my honour.

Cor. Nay, never take it to heart, Flippanta, for I don't believe a word he says. But he does so plague me with his continual scolding, I'm almost weary of my life.

Flip. Why, what is't he finds fault with?

Cor. Nay, I don't know, for I never mind him; when he has babbled for two hours together, methinks I have heard a mill going, that's all. It does not at all change my opinion, Flippanta, it only makes my head ache.

Flip. Nay, if you can bear it so, you are not to be pitied so much as I thought.

Cor. Not pitied! Why is it not a miserable thing for such a young creature as I am should be kept in perpetual solitude, with no other company but a parcel of old fumbling masters, to teach me geography, arithmetic, philosophy, and a thousand useless things? Fine entertainment, indeed, for a young maid at sixteen? Methinks one's time might be better employed.

Flip. Those things will improve your wit.

Cor. Fiddle, faddle! han't I wit enough already? My mother-in-law has learned none of this trumpery, and is not she as happy as the day is long?

Flip. Then you envy her I find?

Cor. And well I may. Does she not do what she has a mind to, in spite of her husband's teeth?

Flip. [*Aside.*] Look you there now! If she has not already conceived that as the supreme blessing of life!

Cor. I'll tell you what, Flippanta; if my mother-in-law would but stand by me a little, and encourage me, and let me keep her company, I'd rebel against my father to-morrow, and throw all my books in the fire. Why, he can't touch a groat of my portion; do you know that, Flippanta!

Flip. [*Aside.*] So—I shall spoil her! Pray Heaven the girl don't debauch me!

Cor. Look you: in short, he may think what he pleases, he may think himself wise; but thoughts are free, and I may think in my turn. I'm but a girl, 'tis true, and a fool too, if you'll believe him; but let him know, a foolish girl may make a wise man's heart ache; so he had as good be quiet.—Now it's out.

Flip. Very well, I love to see a young woman have spirit, it's a sign she'll come to something.

Cor. Ah, Flippanta! if you would but encourage me, you'd find me quite another thing. I'm a devilish girl in the bottom; I wish you'd but let me make one amongst you.

Flip. That never can be till you are married. Come, examine your strength a little. Do you think you durst venture upon a husband?

Cor. A husband! Why, a—if you would but encourage me. Come, Flippanta, be a true friend now. I'll give you advice when I have got a little more experience. Do you in your very conscience and soul think I am old enough to be married?

Flip. Old enough! why, you are sixteen, are you not?

Cor. Sixteen! I am sixteen, two months, and odd days, woman. I keep an exact account.

Flip. The deuse you are!

Cor. Why, do you then truly and sincerely think I am old enough?

Flip. I do upon my faith, child.

Cor. Why, then, to deal as fairly with you, Flippanta, as you do with me, I have thought so any time these three years.

Flip. Now I find you have more wit than ever I thought you had; and to show you what an opinion I have of your discretion, I'll show you a thing I thought to have thrown in the fire.

Cor. What is it, for Jupiter's sake?

Flip. Something will make your heart chuck within you.

Cor. My dear Flippanta!

Flip. What do you think it is?

Cor. I don't know, nor I don't care, but I'm mad to have it.

Flip. It's a four-cornered thing.

Cor. What, like a cardinal's cap?

Flip. No, 'tis worth a whole conclave of 'em. How do you like it? [*Showing the letter.*

Cor. O Lard, a letter! Is there ever a token in it?

Flip. Yes, and a precious one too. There's a handsome young gentleman's heart.

Cor. A handsome young gentleman's heart!—[*Aside.*] Nay, then, it's time to look grave.

Flip. There.

Cor. I shan't touch it.

Flip. What's the matter now?

Cor. I shan't receive it.

Flip. Sure you jest.

Cor. You'll find I don't. I understand myself better than to take letters when I don't know who they are from.

Flip. I'm afraid I commended your wit too soon.

Cor. 'Tis all one, I shan't touch it, unless I know who it comes from.

Flip. Heyday! open it and you'll see.

Cor. Indeed I shall not.

Flip. Well—then I must return it where I had it.

Cor. That won't serve your turn, madam. My father must have an account of this.

Flip. Sure you are not in earnest?

Cor. You'll find I am.

Flip. So, here's fine work! This 'tis to deal with girls before they come to know the distinction of sexes!

Cor. Confess who you had it from, and perhaps, for this once, I mayn't tell my father.

Flip. Why then since it must out, 'twas the colonel. But why are you so scrupulous, madam?

Cor. Because if it had come from anybody else —I would not have given a farthing for it. [*Twitching it eagerly out of her hand.*

Flip. Ah, my dear little rogue!—[*Kissing her.*] You frightened me out of my wits.

Cor. Let me read it! let me read it! let me read it! let me read it! I say.—Um, um, um.—*Cupid's*,—um, um, um,—*darts*,—um, um, um,—*beauty*,—um,—*charms*,—um, um, um,—*angel*,—um,—*goddess*,—um.—[*Kissing the letter.*] um, um, um,—*truest lover*,—um, um,—*eternal constancy*,—um, um, um,—*cruel*,—um, um, um,—*racks*,—um, um,—*tortures*,—um, um,—*fifty daggers*,—um, um,—*bleeding heart*,—um, um,—*dead man*.—Very well, a mighty civil letter I promise you; not one smutty word in it: I'll go lock it up in my comb-box.

Flip. Well—but what does he say to you?

Cor. Not a word of news, Flippanta; 'tis all about business.

Flip. Does he not tell you he's in love with you?

Cor. Ay, but he told me that before.

Flip. How so? he never spoke to you.

Cor. He sent me word by his eyes.

Flip. Did he so? mighty well! I thought you had been to learn that language.

Cor. Oh, but you thought wrong, Flippanta. What, because I don't go a-visiting, and see the world, you think I know nothing! But you should consider, Flippanta, that the more one's alone the more one thinks; and 'tis thinking that improves a girl, I'll have you to know, when I was younger than I am now, by more than I'll boast of, I thought of things would have made you stare again.

Flip. Well, since you are so well versed in your business, I suppose I need not inform you, that if you don't write your gallant an answer—he'll die.

Cor. Nay, now, Flippanta, I confess you tell me something I did not know before. Do you speak in serious sadness? are men given to die if their mistresses are sour to 'em?

Flip. Um—I can't say they all die.—No, I can't say they all do; but truly, I believe it would go very hard with the colonel.

Cor. Lard, I would not have my hands in blood for thousands; and therefore, Flippanta—if you'll encourage me—

Flip. O by all means an answer.

Cor. Well, since you say it then, I'll e'en in and do it, though I protest to you (lest you should think me too forward now) he's the only man that wears a beard I'd ink my fingers for.—[*Aside.*] Maybe if I marry him, in a year or two's time I mayn't be so nice. [*Exit.*

Flip. Now Heaven give him joy; he's like to have a rare wife o' thee! But where there's money, a man has a plaster to his sore. They have a blessed time on't, who marry for love. See!—here comes an example—Araminta's dread lord.

Enter MONEYTRAP.

Mon. Ah, Flippanta! How do you do, good Flippanta? how do you do?

Flip. Thank you, sir, well, at your service.

Mon. And how does the good family, your master, and your fair mistress? Are they at home?

Flip. Neither of 'em; my master has been gone out these two hours, and my lady is just gone with your wife.

Mon. Well, I won't say I have lost my labour, however, as long as I have met with you Flippanta. For I have wished a great while for an opportunity to talk with you a little. You won't take it amiss, if I should ask you a few questions?

Flip. Provided you leave me to my liberty in my answers.—[*Aside.*] What's this cotquean going to pry into now!

Mon. Prithee, good Flippanta, how do your master and mistress live together?

Flip. Live! why—like man and wife; generally out of humour, quarrel often, seldom agree, complain of one another; and perhaps have both reason. In short, 'tis much as 'tis at your house.

Mon. Good lack! But whose side are you generally of?

Flip. Oh, the right side always, my lady's. And if you'll have me give you my opinion of these matters, sir, I do not think a husband can ever be in the right.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. Little peaking, creeping, sneaking, stingy, covetous, cowardly, dirty, cuckoldly things.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. Fit for nothing but tailors and dry-nurses.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. A dog in a manger, snarling and biting, to starve gentlemen with good stomachs.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. A sentry upon pleasure, set to be a plague upon lovers, and damn poor women before their time.

Mon. A husband is indeed—

Flip. Sir, I say, he is nothing.—A beetle without wings, a windmill without sails, a ship in a calm.
Mon. Ha!
Flip. A bag without money—an empty bottle—dead small beer.
Mon. Ha!
Flip. A quack without drugs.
Mon. Ha!
Flip. A lawyer without knavery.
Mon. Ha!
Flip. A courtier without flattery.
Mon. Ha!
Flip. A king without an army—or a people with one. Have I drawn him, sir?
Mon. Why truly, Flippanta, I can't deny but there are some general lines of resemblance. But you know there may be exceptions.
Flip. Hark you, sir, shall I deal plainly with you? Had I got a husband, I would put him in mind that he was married as well as I. [*Sings.*

For were I the thing call'd a wife,
And my fool grew too fond of his power,
He should look like an ass all his life,
For a prank that I'd play in an hour.
Tol lol, la ra, tol tol, &c.

Do you observe that, sir?
Mon. I do: and think you would be in the right on't. But, prithee, why dost not give this advice to thy mistress?
Flip. For fear it should go round to your wife, sir, for you know they are playfellows.
Mon. Oh, there's no danger of my wife; she knows I'm none of those husbands.
Flip. Are you sure she knows that, sir?
Mon. I'm sure she ought to know it, Flippanta, for really I have but four faults in the world.
Flip. And, pray, what may they be?
Mon. Why, I'm a little slovenly, I shift but once a week.
Flip. Fough!
Mon. I am sometimes out of humour.
Flip. Provoking!
Mon. I don't give her so much money as she'd have.
Flip. Insolent!
Mon. And a—perhaps I mayn't be quite so young as I was.
Flip. The devil!
Mon. Oh, but then consider how 'tis on her side, Flippanta. She ruins me with washing, is always out of humour, ever wanting money, and will never be older.
Flip. That last article, I must confess, is a little hard upon you.
Mon. Ah, Flippanta! didst thou but know the daily provocations I have, thou'dst be the first to excuse my faults. But now I think on't—thou art none of my friend, thou dost not love me at all; no, not at all.
Flip. And whither is this little reproach going to lead us now?
Mon. You have power over your fair mistress, Flippanta.
Flip. Sir!
Mon. But what then? you hate me.
Flip. I understand you not.
Mon. There's not a moment's trouble her naughty husband gives her but I feel it too.
Flip. I don't know what you mean.
Mon. If she did but know what part I take in her sufferings—
Flip. Mighty obscure!
Mon. Well, I'll say no more: but—
Flip. All Hebrew!
Mon. If thou wouldst but tell her on't.
Flip. Still darker and darker!
Mon. I should not be ungrateful.
Flip. Ah, now I begin to understand you.
Mon. Flippanta—there's my purse.
Flip. Say no more; now you explain, indeed—you are in love?
Mon. Bitterly—and I do swear by all the gods—
Flip. Hold!—spare 'em for another time, you stand in no need of 'em now. A usurer that parts with his purse, gives sufficient proof of his sincerity.
Mon. I hate my wife, Flippanta.
Flip. That we'll take upon your bare word.
Mon. She's the devil, Flippanta.
Flip. You like your neighbour's better?
Mon. Oh!—an angel!
Flip. What pity it is the law don't allow trucking!
Mon. If it did, Flippanta!
Flip. But since it don't, sir—keep the reins upon your passion: don't let your flame rage too high, lest my lady should be cruel, and it should dry you up to a mummy.
Mon. 'Tis impossible she can be so barbarous to let me die. Alas, Flippanta! a very small matter would save my life.
Flip. Then y'are dead—for we women never grant anything to a man who will be satisfied with a little.
Mon. Dear Flippanta, that was only my modesty; but since you'll have it out—I am a very dragon: and so your lady'll find—if ever she thinks fit to be—Now I hope you'll stand my friend.
Flip. Well, sir, as far as my credit goes, it shall be employed in your service.
Mon. My best Flippanta!—Tell her—I'm all hers—tell her—my body's hers—tell her—my soul's hers—and tell her—my estate's hers. Lard have mercy upon me, how I'm in love!
Flip. Poor man! what a sweat he's in! But hark—I hear my master; for heaven's sake compose yourself a little, you are in such a fit, o'my conscience he'll smell you out.
Mon. Ah dear! I'm in such an emotion, I dare not be seen; put me in this closet for a moment.
Flip. Closet, man! it's too little, your love would stifle you. Go air yourself in the garden a little, you have need on't i'faith.—[*She puts him out.*] A rare adventure, by my troth! This will be curious news to the wives. Fortune has now put their husbands into their hands, and I think they are too sharp to neglect its favours.

Enter GRIPE.

Gripe. Oh, here's the right hand; the rest of the body can't be far off.—Where's my wife, huswife?
Flip. An admirable question!—Why, she's gone abroad, sir.
Gripe. Abroad, abroad, abroad already! Why, she uses to be stewing in her bed three hours after this time, as late as 'tis. What makes her gadding so soon?

Flip. Business, I suppose.

Gripe. Business! she has a pretty head for business truly. O ho, let her change her way of living, or I'll make her change a light heart for a heavy one.

Flip. And why would you have her change her way of living, sir? You see it agrees with her. She never looked better in her life.

Gripe. Don't tell me of her looks, I have done with her looks long since. But I'll make her change her life, or—

Flip. Indeed, sir, you won't.

Gripe. Why, what shall hinder me, Insolence?

Flip. That which hinders most husbands—contradiction.

Gripe. Suppose I resolve I won't be contradicted?

Flip. Suppose she resolves you shall?

Gripe. A wife's resolution is not good by law.

Flip. Nor a husband's by custom.

Gripe. I tell thee, I will not bear it.

Flip. I tell you, sir, you will bear it.

Gripe. Oons! I have borne it three years already.

Flip. By that you see 'tis but giving your mind to it.

Gripe. My mind to it! Death and the devil! My mind to it!

Flip. Look ye, sir, you may swear and damn, and call the furies to assist you; but till you apply the remedy to the right place, you'll never cure the disease. You fancy you have got an extravagant wife, is't not so?

Gripe. Prithee change me that word fancy, and it is so.

Flip. Why there's it. Men are strangely troubled with the vapours of late. You'll wonder now, if I tell you, you have the most reasonable wife in town: and that all the disorders you think you see in her, are only here, here, here, in your own head. [*Thumping his forehead.*

Gripe. She is then, in thy opinion, a reasonable woman?

Flip. By my faith I think so.

Gripe. I shall run mad!—Name me an extravagance in the world she is not guilty of.

Flip. Name me an extravagance in the world she is guilty of.

Gripe. Come then: does not she put the whole house in disorder?

Flip. Not that I know of, for she never comes into it but to sleep.

Gripe. 'Tis very well: does she employ any one moment of her life in the government of her family?

Flip. She is so submissive a wife she leaves it entirely to you.

Gripe. Admirable! Does she not spend more money in coach-hire, and chair-hire, than would maintain six children?

Flip. She's too nice of your credit to be seen daggling in the streets.

Gripe. Good! Do I set eye on her sometimes in a week together?

Flip. That, sir, is because you are never stirring at the same time; you keep odd hours; you are always going to bed when she's rising, and rising just when she's coming to bed.

Gripe. Yes truly, night into day, and day into night, bawdy-house play, that's her trade! But these are trifles: has she not lost her diamond necklace? Answer me to that, Trapes.

Flip. Yes; and has sent as many tears after it as if it had been her husband.

Gripe. Ah!—the pox take her! but enough. 'Tis resolved, and I will put a stop to the course of her life, or I will put a stop to the course of her blood, and so she shall know the first time I meet with her.—[*Aside.*] Which though we are man and wife, and lie under one roof, 'tis very possible may not be this fortnight. [*Exit.*

Flip. Nay, thou hast a blessed time on't, that must be confessed. What a miserable devil is a husband! Insupportable to himself, and a plague to everything about them. Their wives do by them as children do by dogs, tease and provoke 'em, till they make 'em so cursed, they snarl and bite at everything that comes in their reach. This wretch here is grown perverse to that degree, he's for his wife's keeping home, and making hell of his house, so he may be the devil in it, to torment her. How niggardly soever he is, of all things he possesses, he is willing to purchase her misery, at the expense of his own peace. But he'd as good be still, for he'll miss of his aim. If I know her (which I think I do) she'll set his blood in such a ferment, it shall bubble out at every pore of him; whilst hers is so quiet in her veins, her pulse shall go like a pendulum. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Mrs. Amlet's *House.*

Enter Dick Amlet.

Dick. Where's this old woman?—A-hey! What the devil, nobody at home! Ha! her strong-box! and the key in't! 'tis so. Now Fortune be my friend. What the deuse!—not a penny of money in cash!—nor a chequer note!—nor a bank bill!—[*Searches the strong box.*] Nor a crooked stick! nor a—mum!—here's something.—A diamond necklace, by all the gods!—Oons, the old woman!—Zest!

[*Claps the necklace in his pocket, then runs and asks her blessing.*

Enter Mrs. Amlet.

Pray mother, pray to, &c.

Mrs. Aml. Is it possible!—Dick upon his humble knee! Ah my dear child!—May Heaven be good unto thee.

Dick. I'm come, my dear mother, to pay my duty to you, and to ask your consent to—

Mrs. Aml. What a shape is there!

Dick. To ask your consent, I say, to marry a great fortune; for what is riches in this world without a blessing? and how can there be a blessing without respect and duty to parents?

Mrs. Aml. What a nose he has!

Dick. And therefore it being the duty of every

good child not to dispose of himself in marriage, without the—

Mrs. Aml. Now the Lord love thee!—[*Kissing him.*] for thou art a goodly young man. Well, Dick,—and how goes it with the lady? Are her eyes open to thy charms? does she see what's for her own good? is she sensible of the blessings thou hast in store for her? ha! is all sure? hast thou broke a piece of money with her? Speak, bird, do: don't be modest and hide thy love from thy mother, for I'm an indulgent parent.

Dick. Nothing under heaven can prevent my good fortune but its being discovered I am your son—

Mrs. Aml. Then thou art still ashamed of thy natural mother—graceless! why, I'm no whore, sirrah.

Dick. I know you are not.—A whore! bless us all!

Mrs. Aml. No; my reputation's as good as the best of 'em; and though I'm old, I'm chaste, you rascal you!

Dick. Lord, that is not the thing we talk of, mother; but—

Mrs. Aml. I think, as the world goes, they may be proud of marrying their daughter into a vartuous family.

Dick. Oons! Vartue is not the case—

Mrs. Aml. Where she may have a good example before her eyes.

Dick. O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!

Mrs. Aml. I'm a woman that don't so much as encourage an incontinent look towards me.

Dick. I tell you, 'sdeath, I tell you—

Mrs. Aml. If a man should make an uncivil motion to me, I'd spit in his lascivious face: and all this you may tell 'em, sirrah.

Dick. Death and furies! the woman's out of her—

Mrs. Aml. Don't you swear, you rascal you, don't you swear; we shall have thee damned at last, and then I shall be disgraced.

Dick. Why, then in cool blood hear me speak to you. I tell you it's a city fortune I'm about, she cares not a fig for your vartue, she'll hear of nothing but quality. She has quarrelled with one of her friends for having a better complexion, and is resolved she'll marry, to take place of her.

Mrs. Aml. What a cherry-lip is there!

Dick. Therefore, good dear mother now, have a care and don't discover me; for if you do, all's lost.

Mrs. Aml. Dear, dear, how thy fair bride will be delighted! Go, get thee gone, go! Go fetch her home! go fetch her home! I'll give her a sack-posset, and a pillow of down she shall lay her head upon. Go, fetch her home, I say!

Dick. Take care then of the main chance, my dear mother; remember if you discover me—

Mrs. Aml. Go, fetch her home, I say!

Dick. You promise me then—

Mrs. Aml. March!

Dick. But swear to me—

Mrs. Aml. Begone, sirrah!

Dick. Well, I'll rely upon you.—But one kiss before I go. [*Kisses her heartily, and runs off.*

Mrs. Aml. Now the Lord love thee; for thou art a comfortable young man! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* GRIPE's *House.*

Enter CORINNA *and* FLIPPANTA.

Cor. But hark you, Flippanta, if you don't think he loves me dearly, don't give him my letter after all.

Flip. Let me alone.

Cor. When he has read it, let him give it you again.

Flip. Don't trouble yourself.

Cor. And not a word of the pudding to my mother-in-law.

Flip. Enough.

Cor. When we come to love one another to the purpose, she shall know all.

Flip. Ay, then 'twill be time.

Cor. But remember 'tis you make me do all this now, so if any mischief comes on't, 'tis you must answer for't.

Flip. I'll be your security.

Cor. I'm young, and know nothing of the matter; but you have experience, so it's your business to conduct me safe.

Flip. Poor innocence!

Cor. But tell me in serious sadness, Flippanta, does he love me with the very soul of him?

Flip. I have told you so a hundred times, and yet you are not satisfied.

Cor. But, methinks, I'd fain have him tell me so himself.

Flip. Have patience, and it shall be done.

Cor. Why, patience is a virtue; that we must all confess.—But, I fancy, the sooner it's done the better, Flippanta.

Enter JESSAMIN.

Jes. Madam, yonder's your geography-master waiting for you. [*Exit.*

Cor. Ah, how I am tired with these old fumbling fellows, Flippanta!

Flip. Well, don't let 'em break your heart, you shall be rid of 'em all ere long.

Cor. Nay, 'tis not the study I'm so weary of, Flippanta, 'tis the odious thing that teaches me. Were the colonel my master, I fancy I could take pleasure in learning everything he could show me.

Flip. And he can show you a great deal, I can tell you that. But get you gone in, here's somebody coming, we must not be seen together.

Cor. I will, I will, I will!—Oh, the dear colonel! [*Exit, running.*

Enter MRS. AMLET.

Flip. O ho, it's Mrs. Amlet.—What brings you so soon to us again, Mrs. Amlet?

Mrs. Aml. Ah, my dear Mrs. Flippanta, I'm in a furious fright!

Flip. Why, what's come to you?

Mrs. Aml. Ah, mercy on us all!—Madam's diamond necklace—

Flip. What of that?

Mrs. Aml. Are you sure you left it at my house?

Flip. Sure I left it! a very pretty question truly!

Mrs. Aml. Nay, don't be angry; say nothing to madam of it, I beseech you. It will be found again, if it be Heaven's good will. At least 'tis I must bear the loss on't. 'Tis my rogue of a son has laid his birdlime fingers on't.

Flip. Your son, Mrs. Amlet! Do you breed your children up to such tricks as these then?

Mrs. Aml. What shall I say to you, Mrs. Flippanta? Can I help it? He has been a rogue from his cradle, Dick has. But he has his deserts too. And now it comes in my head, mayhap he may have no ill design in this neither.

Flip. No ill design, woman! He's a pretty fellow if he can steal a diamond necklace with a good one.

Mrs. Aml. You don't know him, Mrs. Flippanta, so well as I that bore him. Dick's a rogue, 'tis true, but—mum!—

Flip. What does the woman mean!

Mrs. Aml. Hark you, Mrs. Flippanta, is not here a young gentlewoman in your house that wants a husband?

Flip. Why do you ask?

Mrs. Aml. By way of conversation only, it does not concern me; but when she marries, I may chance to dance at the wedding. Remember I tell you so; I who am but Mrs. Amlet.

Flip. You dance at her wedding! you!

Mrs. Aml. Yes I, I; but don't trouble madam about her necklace, perhaps it mayn't go out of the family. Adieu, Mrs. Flippanta. [*Exit.*

Flip. What—what—what does the woman mean? Mad! What a capilotade of a story's here? The necklace lost; and her son Dick; and a fortune to marry; and she shall dance at the wedding; and—she does not intend, I hope, to propose a match between her son Dick and Corinna? By my conscience I believe she does. An old beldam!

Enter BRASS.

Brass. Well, hussy, how stand our affairs? Has miss writ us an answer yet? my master's very impatient yonder.

Flip. And why the deuse does not he come himself? What does he send such idle fellows as thee of his errands? Here I had her alone just now. —He won't have such an opportunity again this month, I can tell him that.

Brass. So much the worse for him; 'tis his business.—But now, my dear, let thee and I talk a little of our own: I grow most damnably in love with thee; dost hear that?

Flip. Phu! thou art always timing things wrong; my head is full at present of more important things than love.

Brass. Then it's full of important things indeed: dost want a privy-counsellor?

Flip. I want an assistant.

Brass. To do what?

Flip. Mischief.

Brass. I'm thy man—touch.

Flip. But before I venture to let thee into my project, prithee tell me whether thou findest a natural disposition to ruin a husband to oblige his wife?

Brass. Is she handsome?

Flip. Yes.

Brass. Why then my disposition's at her service.

Flip. She's beholden to thee.

Brass. Not she alone neither, therefore don't let her grow vain upon't; for I have three or four affairs of that kind going at this time.

Flip. Well, go carry this epistle from Miss to thy master; and when thou comest back I'll tell thee thy business.

Brass. I'll know it before I go, if you please.

Flip. Thy master waits for an answer.

Brass. I'd rather he should wait than I.

Flip. Why then, in short, Araminta's husband is in love with my lady.

Brass. Very well, child, we have a Rowland for her Oliver: thy lady's husband is in love with Araminta.

Flip. Who told you that, sirrah?

Brass. 'Tis a negotiation I am charged with, pert. Did not I tell thee I did business for half the town? I have managed Master Gripe's little affairs for him these ten years, you slut you.

Flip. Hark thee, Brass, the game's in our hands, if we can but play the cards.

Brass. Pique and repique, you jade you, if the wives will fall into a good intelligence.

Flip. Let them alone; I'll answer for 'em they don't slip the occasion.—See here they come. They little think what a piece of good news we have for 'em.

Enter CLARISSA *and* ARAMINTA.

Clar. Jessamin!

Enter JESSAMIN.

Here, boy, carry up these things into my dressing-room, and break as many of them by the way as you can, be sure.—[*Exit* JESSAMIN.] Oh, art thou there, Brass! what news?

Brass. Madam, I only called in as I was going by.—But some little propositions Mrs. Flippanta has been starting, have kept me here to offer your ladyship my humble service.

Clar. What propositions?

Brass. She'll acquaint you, madam.

Aram. Is there anything new, Flippanta?

Flip. Yes, and pretty too.

Clar. That follows of course; but let's have it quick.

Flip. Why, madam, you have made a conquest.

Clar. Hussy!—But of who? quick!

Flip. Of Mr. Moneytrap, that's all.

Aram. My husband!

Flip. Yes, your husband, madam. You thought fit to corrupt ours, so now we are even with you.

Aram. Sure thou art in jest, Flippanta!

Flip. Serious as my devotions.

Brass. And the cross intrigue, ladies, is what our brains have been at work about.

Aram. [*To* CLARISSA.] My dear!

Clar. My life!

Aram. My angel!

Clar. My soul! [*Hugging one another.*

Aram. The stars have done this.

Clar. The pretty little twinklers.

Flip. And what will you do for them now?

Clar. What grateful creatures ought; show 'em we don't despise their favours.

Aram. But is not this a wager between these two blockheads?

Clar. I would not give a shilling to go the winner's halves.

Aram. Then 'tis the most fortunate thing that ever could have happened.

Clar. All your last night's ideas, Araminta, were trifles to it.

Aram. Brass (my dear) will be useful to us.

Brass. At your service, madam.

Clar. Flippanta will be necessary, my life.

Flip. She waits your commands, madam.

Aram. For my part then, I recommend my husband to thee, Flippanta, and make it my earnest request thou won't leave him one half-crown.

Flip. I'll do all I can to obey you, madam.

Brass. [*To* CLARISSA.] If your ladyship would give me the same kind orders for yours.

Clar. Oh—if thou sparest him, Brass, I'm thy enemy till I die.

Brass. 'Tis enough, madam, I'll be sure to give you a reasonable account of him. But how do you intend we shall proceed, ladies? Must we storm the purse at once, or break ground in form, and carry it by little and little?

Clar. Storm, dear Brass, storm! Ever whilst you live, storm!

Aram. Oh, by all means!—Must it not be so, Flippanta?

Flip. In four-and-twenty hours, two hundred pounds a-piece, that's my sentence.

Brass. Very well.—But, ladies, you'll give me leave to put you in mind of some little expense in favours, 'twill be necessary you are at, to these honest gentlemen.

Aram. Favours, Brass!

Brass. Um—a—some small matters, madam, I doubt must be.

Clar. Now that's a vile article, Araminta; for that thing your husband is so like mine—

Flip. Phu, there's a scruple, indeed! Pray, madam, don't be so squeamish; though the meat be a little flat, we'll find you savoury sauce to it.

Clar. This wench is so mad.

Flip. Why, what in the name of Lucifer is it you have to do that's so terrible?

Brass. A civil look only.

Aram. There's no great harm in that.

Flip. An obliging word.

Clar. That one may afford 'em.

Brass. A little smile *à propos.*

Aram. That's but giving one's self an air.

Flip. Receive a little letter, perhaps.

Clar. Women of quality do that from fifty odious fellows.

Brass. Suffer (maybe) a squeeze by the hand.

Aram. One's so used to that one does not feel it.

Flip. Or if a kiss would do't?

Clar. I'd die first!

Brass. Indeed, ladies, I doubt 'twill be necessary to—

Clar. Get their wretched money, without paying so dear for it.

Flip. Well, just as you please for that, my ladies. But I suppose you'll play upon the square with your favours, and not pique yourselves upon being one more grateful than another?

Brass. And state a fair account of receipts and disbursements?

Aram. That I think should be indeed.

Clar. With all my heart, and Brass shall be our bookkeeper. So get thee to work, man, as fast as thou canst; but not a word of all this to thy master.

Brass. I'll observe my orders, madam. [*Exit.*

Clar. I'll have the pleasure of telling him myself; he'll be violently delighted with it. 'Tis the best man in the world, Araminta; he'll bring us rare company to-morrow, all sorts of gamesters; and thou shalt see my husband will be such a beast to be out of humour at it.

Aram. The monster!—But hush, here's my dear approaching: prithee let's leave him to Flippanta.

Flip. Ay, pray do, I'll bring you a good account of him, I'll warrant you.

Clar. Despatch then, for the basset-table's in haste. [*Exit with* ARAMINTA.

Flip. So, now have at him; here he comes. We'll try if we can pillage the usurer, as he does other folks.

Enter MONEYTRAP.

Mon. Well, my pretty Flippanta, is thy mistress come home?

Flip. Yes, sir.

Mon. And where is she, prithee?

Flip. Gone abroad, sir.

Mon. How dost mean?

Flip. I mean right, sir; my lady 'll come home and go abroad ten times in an hour, when she's either in very good humour, or very bad.

Mon. Good lack! But I'll warrant, in general, 'tis her naughty husband that makes her house uneasy to her. But hast thou said a little something to her, chicken, for an expiring lover? ha!

Flip. Said!—yes, I have said; much good may it do me!

Mon. Well, and how?

Flip. And how!—And how do you think you would have me do't? And you have such a way with you, one can refuse you nothing. But I have brought myself into a fine business by it.

Mon. Good lack!—But I hope, Flippanta—

Flip. Yes, your hopes will do much, when I am turned out of doors.

Mon. Was she then terrible angry?

Flip. Oh! had you seen how she flew, when she saw where I was pointing; for you must know I went round the bush, and round the bush, before I came to the matter.

Mon. Nay, 'tis a ticklish point, that must be owned.

Flip. On my word is it—I mean where a lady's truly virtuous; for that's our case, you must know.

Mon. A very dangerous case indeed.

Flip. But I can tell you one thing—she has an inclination to you.

Mon. Is it possible!

Flip. Yes, and I told her so at last.

Mon. Well, and what did she answer thee?

Flip. Slap—and bid me bring it you for a token. [*Giving him a slap on the face.*

Mon. [*Aside.*] And you have lost none on't by the way, with a pox t'ye!

Flip. Now this, I think, looks the best in the world.

Mon. Yea, but really it feels a little oddly.

Flip. Why, you must know, ladies have different ways of expressing their kindness, according to the humour they are in. If she had been in a good one, it had been a kiss; but as long as she sent you something, your affairs go well.

Mon. Why, truly, I am a little ignorant in the mysterious paths of love, so I must be guided by thee. But, prithee, take her in a good humour next token she sends me.

Flip. Ah—good humour!

Mon. What's the matter?

Flip. Poor lady!

Mon. Ha!

Flip. If I durst tell you all—

Mon. What then?

Flip. You would not expect to see her in one a good while.

Mon. Why, I pray?

Flip. I must own I did take an unseasonable time to talk of love-matters to her.

Mon. Why, what's the matter?

Flip. Nothing.

Mon. Nay, prithee tell me.

Flip. I dare not.

Mon. You must indeed.

Flip. Why, when women are in difficulties, how can they think of pleasure?

Mon. Why, what difficulties can she be in?

Flip. Nay, I do but guess after all; for she has that grandeur of soul, she'd die before she'd tell.

Mon. But what dost thou suspect?

Flip. Why, what should one suspect, where a husband loves nothing but getting of money, and a wife nothing but spending on't?

Mon. So she wants that same then?

Flip. I say no such thing, I know nothing of the matter; pray make no wrong interpretation of what I say, my lady wants nothing that I know of. 'Tis true—she has had ill luck at cards of late; I believe she has not won once this month: but what of that?

Mon. Ha!

Flip. 'Tis true, I know her spirit's that she'd see her husband hanged before she'd ask him for a farthing.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. And then I know him again, he'd see her drowned before he'd give her a farthing; but that's a help to your affair, you know.

Mon. 'Tis so indeed.

Flip. Ah—well, I'll say nothing; but if she had none of these things to fret her—

Mon. Why really, Flippanta—

Flip. I know what you are going to say now; you are going to offer your service, but 'twon't do; you have a mind to play the gallant now, but it must not be, you want to be showing your liberality, but 'twon't be allowed; you'll be pressing me to offer it, and she'll be in a rage. We shall have the devil to do.

Mon. You mistake me, Flippanta; I was only going to say—

Flip. Ay, I know what you were going to say well enough; but I tell you it will never do so. If one could find out some way now—ay—let me see—

Mon. Indeed I hope—

Flip. Pray be quiet—no—but I'm thinking—hum—she'll smoke that though—let us consider. —If one could find a way to—'Tis the nicest point in the world to bring about, she'll never touch it, if she knows from whence it comes.

Mon. Shall I try if I can reason her husband out of twenty pounds, to make her easy the rest of her life?

Flip. Twenty pounds, man!—why you shall see her set that upon a card. Oh, she has a great soul!—Besides, if her husband should oblige her, it might, in time, take off her aversion to him, and by consequence, her inclination to you. No, no, it must never come that way.

Mon. What shall we do then?

Flip. Hold still—I have it. I'll tell you what you shall do.

Mon. Ay.

Flip. You shall make her—a restitution—of two hundred pounds.

Mon. Ha!—a restitution!

Flip. Yes, yes, 'tis the luckiest thought in the world; madam often plays, you know, and folks who do so meet now and then with sharpers. Now you shall be a sharper.

Mon. A sharper!

Flip. Ay, ay, a sharper, and having cheated her of two hundred pounds, shall be troubled in mind, and send it her back again. You comprehend me?

Mon. Yes I—I comprehend, but a—won't she suspect if it be so much?

Flip. No, no, the more the better.

Mon. Two hundred pound!

Flip. Yes, two hundred pound.—Or let me see —so even a sum may look a little suspicious,—ay —let it be two hundred and thirty; that odd thirty will make it look so natural the devil won't find it out.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. Pounds, too, look I don't know how; guineas I fancy were better:—ay, guineas, it shall be guineas. You are of that mind, are you not?

Mon. Um—a guinea, you know, Flippanta, is—

Flip. A thousand times genteeler; you are certainly in the right on't; it shall be as you say, two hundred and thirty guineas.

Mon. Ho—well, if it must be guineas, let's see, two hundred guineas.

Flip. And thirty; two hundred and thirty: if you mistake the sum, you spoil all. So go put 'em in a purse, while it's fresh in your head, and send 'em to me with a penitential letter, desiring I'll do you the favour to restore 'em to her.

Mon. Two hundred and thirty pounds in a bag!

Flip. Guineas, I say, guineas!

Mon. Ay, guineas, that's true. But, Flippanta, if she don't know they come from me, then I give my money for nothing, you know.

Flip. Phu! leave that to me; I'll manage the stock for you, I'll make it produce something, I'll warrant you.

Mon. Well, Flippanta, 'tis a great sum indeed; but I'll go try what I can do for her. You say, two hundred guineas in a purse?

Flip. And thirty, if the man's in his senses!

Mon. And thirty, 'tis true, I always forget that thirty. [*Exit.*

Flip. So, get thee gone; thou art a rare fellow, i'faith.—Brass!—it's thee, is't not?

Re-enter BRASS.

Brass. It is, huswife. How go matters? I stayed till thy gentleman was gone. Hast done anything towards our common purse?

Flip. I think I have; he's going to make us a restitution of two or three hundred pounds.

Brass. A restitution!—good!

Flip. A new way, sirrah, to make a lady take a present without putting her to the blush.

Brass. 'Tis very well, mighty well, indeed. Prithee, where's thy master? let me try if I can persuade him to be troubled in mind too.

Flip. Not so hasty; he's gone into his closet to prepare himself for a quarrel. I have advised him to be with his wife.

Brass. What to do?

Flip. Why, to make her stay at home, now she

has resolved to do it beforehand. You must know, sirrah, we intend to make a merit of our basset-table, and get a good pretence for the merry companions we intend to fill his house with.

Brass. Very nicely spun, truly; thy husband will be a happy man.

Flip. Hold your tongue, you fool you! See here comes your master.

Brass. He's welcome.

Enter DICK AMLET.

Dick. My dear Flippanta, how many thanks have I to pay thee!

Flip. Do you like her style?

Dick. The kindest little rogue! there's nothing but she gives me leave to hope. I am the happiest man the world has in its care.

Flip. Not so happy as you think for neither, perhaps; you have a rival, sir, I can tell you that.

Dick. A rival!

Flip. Yes, and a dangerous one too.

Dick. Who, in the name of terror?

Flip. A devilish fellow; one Mr. Amlet.

Dick. Amlet! I know no such man.

Flip. You know the man's mother though; you met her here, and are in her favour, I can tell you. If he worst you in your mistress, you shall e'en marry her, and disinherit him.

Dick. If I have no other rival but Mr. Amlet, I believe I shan't be much disturbed in my amour. But can't I see Corinna?

Flip. I don't know, she has always some of her masters with her: but I'll go see if she can spare you a moment, and bring you word. [*Exit.*

Dick. I wish my old hobbling mother han't been blabbing something here she should not do.

Brass. Fear nothing, all's safe on that side yet. But how speaks young mistress's epistle? soft and tender?

Dick. As pen can write.

Brass. So you think all goes well there?

Dick. As my heart can wish.

Brass. You are sure on't?

Dick. Sure on't.

Brass. Why then, ceremony aside,—[*Putting on his hat.*] you and I must have a little talk, Mr. Amlet.

Dick. Ah, Brass, what art thou going to do? Wou't ruin me?

Brass. Look you, Dick, few words; you are in a smooth way of making your fortune; I hope all will roll on. But how do you intend matters shall pass 'twixt you and me in this business?

Dick. Death and furies! what a time dost take to talk on't!

Brass. Good words, or I betray you; they have already heard of one Mr. Amlet in the house.

Dick. Here's a son of a whore! [*Aside.*

Brass. In short, look smooth, and be a good prince. I am your valet, 'tis true; your footman sometimes, which I'm enraged at; but you have always had the ascendant, I confess. When we were schoolfellows, you made me carry your books, make your exercise, own your rogueries, and sometimes take a whipping for you. When we were fellow-prentices, though I was your senior, you made me open the shop, clean my master's shoes, cut last at dinner, and eat all the crust. In our sins too, I must own you still kept me under; you soared up to adultery with our mistress, while I was at humble fornication with the maid. Nay, in our punishments you still made good your post; for when once upon a time I was sentenced but to be whipped, I cannot deny but you were condemned to be hanged. So that in all times, I must confess, your inclinations have been greater and nobler than mine: however, I cannot consent that you should at once fix fortune for life, and I dwell in my humilities for the rest of my days.

Dick. Hark thee, Brass, if I do not most nobly by thee, I'm a dog.

Brass. And when?

Dick. As soon as ever I am married.

Brass. Ah, the pox take thee!

Dick. Then you mistrust me?

Brass. I do, by my faith! Look you, sir, some folks we mistrust, because we don't know 'em; others we mistrust, because we do know 'em: and for one of these reasons I desire there may be a bargain beforehand. If not—[*Raising his voice.*] look ye, Dick Amlet—

Dick. Soft, my dear friend and companion.—[*Aside.*] The dog will ruin me!—[*Aloud.*] Say, what is't will content thee?

Brass. O ho!

Dick. But how canst thou be such a barbarian?

Brass. I learned it at Algiers.

Dick. Come, make thy Turkish demand then.

Brass. You know you gave me a bank-bill this morning to receive for you.

Dick. I did so, of fifty pounds; 'tis thine. So, now thou art satisfied, all's fixed.

Brass. It is not, indeed. There's a diamond necklace you robbed your mother of e'en now.

Dick. Ah, you Jew!

Brass. No words.

Dick. My dear Brass!

Brass. I insist.

Dick. My old friend!

Brass. Dick Amlet—[*Raising his voice*] I insist.

Dick. Ah, the cormorant!—Well, 'tis thine: but thou'lt never thrive with 't.

Brass. When I find it begins to do me mischief, I'll give it you again. But I must have a wedding-suit.

Dick. Well.

Brass. Some good lace.

Dick. Thou shalt.

Brass. A stock of linen.

Dick. Enough.

Brass. Not yet; a silver sword.

Dick. Well, thou shalt have that too. Now thou hast everything.

Brass. God forgive me! I forgot a ring of remembrance: I would not forget all these favours for the world. A sparkling diamond will be always playing in my eye, and put me in mind of 'em.

Dick. [*Aside.*] This unconscionable rogue!—[*Aloud.*] Well, I'll bespeak one for thee.

Brass. Brillant?

Dick. It shall. But if the thing don't succeed after all?—

Brass. I'm a man of honour, and restore: and so the treaty being finished, I strike my flag of defiance, and fall into my respects again. [*Taking off his hat.*

Re-enter FLIPPANTA.

Flip. I have made you wait a little, but I could not help it; her master is but just gone. He has been showing her Prince Eugene's March into Italy.

Dick. Prithee, let me come to her, I'll show her a part of the world he has never shown her yet.

Flip. So I told her, you must know; and she said, she could like to travel in good company: so, if you'll slip up those back-stairs, you shall try if you can agree upon the journey.

Dick. My dear Flippanta!

Flip. None of your dear acknowledgments, I beseech you, but up stairs as hard as you can drive.

Dick. I'm gone. [*Exit.*

Flip. And do you follow him, Jack-a-dandy, and see he is not surprised.

Brass. I thought that was your post, Mrs. Useful. But if you'll come and keep me in humour, I don't care if I share the duty with you.

Flip. No words, sirrah, but follow him; I have somewhat else to do.

Brass. The jade's so absolute, there's no contesting with her. One kiss though, to keep the sentinel warm.—[*Gives her a long kiss.*] So.

[*Exit.*

Flip. [*Wiping her mouth.*] A nasty rogue. But let me see, what have I to do now? This restitution will be here quickly, I suppose; in the mean time I'll go know if my lady's ready for the quarrel yet. Master, yonder, is so full on't, he's ready to burst; but we'll give him vent by-and-by with a witness. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* GRIPE'S *House.*

Enter CORINNA, DICK AMLET, *and* BRASS.

Brass. Don't fear, I'll give timely notice.

[*Goes to the door.*

Dick. Come, you must consent, you shall consent. How can you leave me thus upon the rack? a man who loves you to that excess that I do.

Cor. Nay, that you love me, sir, that I am satisfied in, for you have sworn you do: and I am so pleased with it, I'd fain have you do so as long as you live, so we must never marry.

Dick. Not marry, my dear! why, what's our love good for if we don't marry?

Cor. Ah!—I'm afraid 'twill be good for little if we do.

Dick. Why do you think so?

Cor. Because I hear my father and mother, and my uncle and aunt, and Araminta and her husband, and twenty other married folks, say so from morning to night.

Dick. Oh, that's because they are bad husbands and bad wives; but, in our case, there will be a good husband and a good wife, and so we shall love for ever.

Cor. Why, there may be something in that truly; and I'm always willing to hear reason, as a reasonable young woman ought to do. But are you sure, sir, though we are very good now, we shall be so when we come to be better acquainted?

Dick. I can answer for myself, at least.

Cor. I wish you could answer for me too. You see I am a plain-dealer, sir, I hope you don't like me the worse for it.

Dick. Oh, by no means! 'Tis a sign of admirable morals; and I hope, since you practise it yourself, you'll approve of it in your lover. In one word, therefore, (for 'tis in vain to mince the matter,) my resolution's fixed, and the world can't stagger me, I marry—or I die.

Cor. Indeed, sir, I have much ado to believe you; the disease of love is seldom so violent.

Dick. Madam, I have two diseases to end my miseries; if the first don't do't, the latter shall;—[*Drawing his sword*] one's in my heart, t'other's in my scabbard.

Cor. Not for a diadem!—[*Catching hold of him.*] Ah, put it up! put it up!

Dick. How absolute is your command!—[*Dropping his sword.*] A word, you see, disarms me.

Cor. [*Aside.*] What a power I have over him! The wondrous deeds of love!—[*Aloud.*] Pray, sir, let me have no more of these rash doings though; perhaps I mayn't be always in the saving humour.—[*Aside.*] I'm sure if I had let him stick himself, I should have been envied by all the great ladies in the town.

Dick. Well, madam, have I then your promise? You'll make me the happiest of mankind?

Cor. I don't know what to say to you; but I believe I had as good promise, for I find I shall certainly do't.

Dick. Then let us seal the contract thus.

[*Kisses her.*

Cor. [*Aside.*] Um—he has almost taken away my breath: he kisses purely!

Dick. Hark!—somebody comes.

Brass. [*Peeping in.*] Gare there! the enemy!—No, hold! y'are safe, 'tis Flippanta.

Enter FLIPPANTA.

Flip. Come, have you agreed the matter? If not, you must end it another time, for your father's in motion, so, pray kiss and part.

Cor. That's sweet and sour. — [*They kiss.*] Adieu t'ye, sir! [*Exeunt* DICK AMLET *and* CORINNA.

Enter CLARISSA.

Clar. Have you told him I'm at home, Flippanta?

Flip. Yes, madam.

Clar. And that I'll see him?

Flip. Yes, that too. But here's news for you! I have just now received the restitution.

Clar. That's killing pleasure; and how much has he restored me?

Flip. Two hundred and thirty.

Clar. Wretched rogue! But retreat; your master's coming to quarrel.

Flip. I'll be within call, if things run high.

[*Exit.*

Enter GRIPE.

Gripe. O ho!—are you there i'faith? Madam, your humble servant, I'm very glad to see you at home, I thought I should never have had that honour again.

Clar. Good-morrow, my dear, how d'ye do? Flippanta says you are out of humour, and that you have a mind to quarrel with me. Is it true? ha!—I have a terrible pain in my head, I give you notice on't beforehand.

Gripe. And how the pox should it be otherwise? It's a wonder you are not dead—[*Aside*] as a' would you were!—[*Aloud*] with the life you lead. Are you not ashamed? and do you not blush to—

Clar. My dear child, you crack my brain; soften the harshness of your voice. Say what thou wou't, but let it be in an agreeable tone.

Gripe. Tone, madam! don't tell me of a tone—

Clar. Oh,—if you will quarrel, do it with temperance; let it be all in cool blood, even and smooth, as if you were not moved with what you said; and then I'll hear you as if I were not moved with it neither.

Gripe. Had ever man such need of patience! Madam, madam, I must tell you, madam—

Clar. Another key, or I walk off.

Gripe. Don't provoke me.

Clar. Shall you be long, my dear, in your remonstrances?

Gripe. Yes, madam, and very long.

Clar. If you would quarrel *in abrégée*, I should have a world of obligation to you.

Gripe. What I have to say, forsooth, is not to be expressed *in abrégée*, my complaints are too numerous.

Clar. Complaints! of what, my dear? Have I ever given you subject of complaint, my life?

Gripe. O pox! my dear and my life! I desire none of your tendres.

Clar. How! find fault with my kindness, and my expressions of affection and respect? The world will guess by this what the rest of your complaints may be. I must tell you I'm scandalised at your procedure.

Gripe. I must tell you I'm running mad with yours.

Clar. Ah! how insupportable are the humours of some husbands, so full of fancies, and so ungovernable! What have you in the world to disturb you?

Gripe. What have I to disturb me! I have you, death and the devil!

Clar. Ay, merciful Heaven! how he swears! You should never accustom yourself to such words as these; indeed, my dear, you should not; your mouth's always full of 'em.

Gripe. Blood and thunder! madam—

Clar. Ah, he'll fetch the house down! Do you know you make me tremble for you?—Flippanta! who's there? Flippanta!

Gripe. Here's a provoking devil for you!

Re-enter FLIPPANTA.

Flip. What in the name of Jove's the matter? you'll raise the neighbourhood.

Clar. Why, here's your master in a most violent fuss, and no mortal soul can tell for what.

Gripe. Not tell for what!

Clar. No, my life.—I have begged him to tell me his griefs, Flippanta; and then he swears, good Lord, how he does swear!

Gripe. Ah you wicked jade! ah you wicked jade!

Clar. Do you hear him, Flippanta! do you hear him!

Flip. Pray, sir, let's know a little what puts you in all this fury?

Clar. Prithee stand near me, Flippanta, there's an odd froth about his mouth, looks as if his poor head were going wrong, I'm afraid he'll bite.

Gripe. The wicked woman, Flippanta, the wicked woman!

Clar. Can anybody wonder I shun my own house, when he treats me at this rate in it?

Gripe. At this rate! Why in the devil's name—

Clar. Do you hear him again?

Flip. Come, a little moderation, sir, and try what that will produce.

Gripe. Hang her, 'tis all a pretence to justify her going abroad.

Clar. A pretence! a pretence! Do you hear how black a charge he loads me with? Charges me with a pretence! Is this the return for all my downright open actions? You know, my dear, I scorn pretences: whene'er I go abroad, it is without pretence.

Gripe. Give me patience!

Flip. You have a great deal, sir.

Clar. And yet he's never content, Flippanta.

Gripe. What shall I do!

Clar. What a reasonable man would do; own yourself in the wrong, and be quiet. Here's Flippanta has understanding, and I have moderation; I'm willing to make her judge of our differences.

Flip. You do me a great deal of honour, madam: but I tell you beforehand, I shall be a little on master's side.

Gripe. Right, Flippanta has sense. Come, let her decide.—Have I not reason to be in a passion? tell me that.

Clar. You must tell her for what, my life.

Gripe. Why, for the trade you drive, my soul.

Flip. Look you, sir, pray take things right. I know madam does fret you a little now and then, that's true; but in the fund she is the softest, sweetest, gentlest lady breathing. Let her but live entirely to her own fancy, and she'll never say a word to you from morning to night.

Gripe. Oons! let her but stay at home, and she shall do what she will: in reason, that is.

Flip. D'ye hear that, madam? Nay, now I must be on master's side; you see how he loves you, he desires only your company. Pray give him that satisfaction, or I must pronounce against you.

Clar. Well, I agree. Thou knowest I don't love to grieve him: let him be always in good humour, and I'll be always at home.

Flip. Look you there, sir, what would you have more?

Gripe. Well, let her keep her word, and I'll have done quarrelling.

Clar. I must not, however, so far lose the merit of my consent, as to let you think I'm weary of going abroad, my dear. What I do, is purely to oblige you; which, that I may be able to perform without a relapse, I'll invent what ways I can to make my prison supportable to me.

Flip. Her prison! pretty bird! her prison? don't that word melt you, sir?

Gripe. I must confess I did not expect to find her so reasonable.

Flip. Oh, sir, soon or late wives come into good humour. Husbands must only have a little patience to wait for it.

Clar. The innocent little diversions, dear, that I

shall content myself with, will be chiefly play and company.

Gripe. Oh, I'll find you employment, your time shan't lie upon your hands; though if you, have a mind now for such a companion as a—let me see—Araminta for example, why I shan't be against her being with you from morning till night.

Clar. You can't oblige me more, 'tis the best woman in the world.

Gripe. Is not she?

Flip. Ah, the old satyr! [*Aside*.

Gripe. Then we'll have, besides her, maybe sometimes—her husband; and we shall see my niece that writes verses, and my sister Fidget; with her husband's brother that's always merry; and his little cousin, that's to marry the fat curate; and my uncle the apothecary, with his wife and all his children. Oh, we shall divert ourselves rarely!

Flip. Good! [*Aside*.

Clar. Oh, for that, my dear child, I must be plain with you, I'll see none of 'em but Araminta, who has the manners of the court; for I'll converse with none but women of quality.

Gripe. Ay, ay, they shall all have one quality or other.

Clar. Then, my dear, to make our home pleasant, we'll have consorts of music sometimes.

Gripe. Music in my house!

Clar. Yes, my child, we must have music, or the house will be so dull I shall get the spleen, and be going abroad again.

Flip. Nay, she has so much complaisance for you, sir, you can't dispute such things with her.

Gripe. Ay, but if I have music—

Clar. Ay, but sir, I must have music—

Flip. Not every day, madam don't mean.

Clar. No, bless me, no; but three consorts a week: three days more we'll play after dinner, at ombre, picquet, basset, and so forth, and close the evening with a handsome supper and a ball.

Gripe. A ball!

Clar. Then, my love, you know there is but one day more upon our hands, and that shall be the day of conversation, we'll read verses, talk of books, invent modes, tell lies, scandalise our friends, be pert upon religion; and in short, employ every moment of it in some pretty witty exercise or other.

Flip. What order you see 'tis she proposes to live in! a most wonderful regularity!

Gripe. Regularity with a pox! [*Aside*.

Clar. And as this kind of life, so soft, so smooth, so agreeable, must needs invite a vast deal of company to partake of it, 'twill be necessary to have the decency of a porter at our door, you know.

Gripe. A porter!—a scrivener have a porter, madam!

Clar. Positively, a porter.

Gripe. Why, no scrivener since Adam ever had a porter, woman!

Clar. You will therefore be renowned in story, for having the first, my life.

Gripe. Flippanta!

Flip. [*Aside to* GRIPE.] Hang it, sir, never dispute a trifle; if you vex her, perhaps she'll insist upon a Swiss.

Gripe. But, madam—

Clar. But, sir, a porter, positively a porter; without that the treaty's null, and I go abroad this moment.

Flip. Come, sir, never lose so advantageous a peace for a pitiful porter.

Gripe. Why, I shall be hooted at, the boys will throw stones at my porter. Besides, where shall I have money for all this expense?

Clar. My dear, who asks you for any? Don't be in a fright, chicken.

Gripe. Don't be in a fright, madam! But where, I say—

Flip. Madam plays, sir, think on that; women that play have inexhaustible mines, and wives who receive least money from their husbands, are many times those who spend the most.

Clar. So, my dear, let what Flippanta says content you. Go, my life, trouble yourself with nothing, but let me do just as I please, and all will be well. I'm going into my closet, to consider of some more things to enable me to give you the pleasure of my company at home, without making it too great a misery to a yielding wife. [*Exit*.

Flip. Mirror of goodness! Pattern to all wives! Well sure, sir, you are the happiest of all husbands!

Gripe. Yes—and a miserable dog for all that too, perhaps.

Flip. Why what can you ask more than this matchless complaisance?

Gripe. I don't know what I can ask, and yet I'm not satisfied with what I have neither, the devil mixes in it all, I think; complaisant or perverse, it feels just as't did.

Flip. Why, then, your uneasiness is only a disease, sir; perhaps a little bleeding and purging would relieve you.

Clar. [*Calling within*.] Flippanta!

Flip. Madam calls.—I come, madam.—Come, be merry, be merry, sir, you have cause, take my word for't.—[*Aside*.] Poor devil! [*Exit*.

Gripe. I don't know that, I don't know that: but this I do know, that an honest man, who has married a jade, whether she's pleased to spend her time at home or abroad, had better have lived a bachelor.

Re-enter BRASS.

Brass. Oh, sir, I'm mighty glad I have found you.

Gripe. Why, what's the matter, prithee?

Brass. Can nobody hear us?

Gripe. No, no, speak quickly.

Brass. You han't seen Araminta since the last letter I carried her from you?

Gripe. Not I, I go prudently; I don't press things like your young firebrand lovers.

Brass. But seriously, sir, are you very much in love with her?

Gripe. As mortal man has been.

Brass. I'm sorry for't.

Gripe. Why so, dear Brass?

Brass. If you were never to see her more now? Suppose such a thing, d'you think 'twould break your heart?

Gripe. Oh!

Brass. Nay, now I see you love her; would you did not!

Gripe. My dear friend!

Brass. I'm in your interest deep; you see it.

Gripe. I do: but speak, what miserable story hast thou for me?

Brass. I had rather the devil had, phu!—flown

away with you quick, than to see you so much in love, as I perceive you are, since—

Gripe. Since what?—ho!

Brass. Araminta, sir—

Gripe. Dead?

Brass. No.

Gripe. How then?

Brass. Worse.

Gripe. Out with't.

Brass. Broke.

Gripe. Broke!

Brass. She is, poor lady, in the most unfortunate situation of affairs. But I have said too much.

Gripe. No, no, 'tis very sad, but let's hear it.

Brass. Sir, she charged me, on my life, never to mention it to you, of all men living.

Gripe. Why, who shouldst thou tell it to, but to the best of her friends?

Brass. Ay, why there's it now, it's going just as I fancied. Now will I be hanged if you are not enough in love to be engaging in this matter. But I must tell you, sir, that as much concern as I have for that most excellent, beautiful, agreeable, distressed, unfortunate lady, I'm too much your friend and servant, ever to let it be said, 'twas the means of your being ruined for a woman—by letting you know she esteemed you more than any other man upon earth.

Gripe. Ruined! what dost thou mean?

Brass. Mean! why I mean that women always ruin those that love 'em, that's the rule.

Gripe. The rule!

Brass. Yes, the rule; why, would you have 'em ruin those that don't? How shall they bring that about?

Gripe. But is there a necessity then they should ruin somebody?

Brass. Yes, marry is there; how would you have 'em support their expense else? Why, sir, you can't conceive now—you can't conceive what Araminta's privy-purse requires: only her privy-purse, sir! Why, what do you imagine now she gave me for the last letter I carried her from you? 'Tis true, 'twas from a man she liked, else, perhaps, I had had my bones broke. But what do you think she gave me?

Gripe. Why, mayhap—a shilling.

Brass. A guinea, sir, a guinea! You see by that how fond she was on't, by the by. But then, sir, her coach-hire, her chair-hire, her pin-money, her play-money, her china, and her charity—would consume peers. A great soul, a very great soul! but what's the end of all this?

Gripe. Ha!

Brass. Why, I'll tell you what the end is—a nunnery.

Gripe. A nunnery!

Brass. A nunnery.—In short, she is at last reduced to that extremity, and attacked with such a battalion of duns, that rather than tell her husband (who you know is such a dog, he'd let her go if she did) she has e'en determined to turn papist, and bid the world adieu for life.

Gripe. O terrible! a papist!

Brass. Yes, when a handsome woman has brought herself into difficulties, the devil can't help her out of—to a nunnery, that's another rule, sir.

Gripe. But, but, but, prithee Brass, but—

Brass. But all the buts in the world, sir, won't stop her; she's a woman of a noble resolution. So, sir, your humble servant; I pity her, I pity you, turtle and mate; but the fates will have it so, all's packed up, and I am now going to call her a coach, for she resolves to slip off without saying a word; and the next visit she receives from her friends will be through a melancholy grate, with a veil instead of a top-knot. [*Going*.

Gripe. It must not be, by the powers it must not! she was made for the world, and the world was made for her.

Brass. And yet you see, sir, how small a share she has on't.

Gripe. Poor woman! is there no way to save her?

Brass. Save her! no; how can she be saved? Why she owes above five hundred pound.

Gripe. Oh!

Brass. Five hundred pound, sir; she's like to be saved indeed!—Not but that I know them in this town would give me one of the five if I would persuade her to accept of t'other four: but she has forbid me mentioning it to any soul living; and I have disobeyed her only to you; and so—I'll go and call a coach.

Gripe. Hold!—Dost think, my poor Brass, one might not order it so as to compound those debts for—for—twelve pence in the pound?

Brass. Sir, d'ye hear? I have already tried 'em with ten shillings, and not a rogue will prick up his ear at it. Though after all, for three hundred pounds all in glittering gold, I could set their chaps a-watering. But where's that to be had with honour? there's the thing, sir.—I'll go and call a coach.

Gripe. Hold, once more: I have a note in my closet of two hundred, ay—and fifty, I'll go and give it her myself.

Brass. You will; very genteel truly! Go, slap dash, and offer a woman of her scruples money bolt in her face! Why, you might as well offer her a scorpion, and she'd as soon touch it.

Gripe. Shall I carry it to her creditors then, and treat with them?

Brass. Ay, that's a rare thought.

Gripe. Is not it, Brass?

Brass. Only one little inconvenience by the way.

Gripe. As how?

Brass. That they are your wife's creditors as well as hers; and perhaps it might not be altogether so well to see you clearing the debts of your neighbour's wife, and leaving those of your own unpaid.

Gripe. Why that's true now.

Brass. I'm wise you see, sir.

Gripe. Thou art; and I'm but a young lover. But what shall we do then?

Brass. Why I'm thinking, that if you give me the note, do you see, and that I promise to give you an account of it—

Gripe. Ay, but look you, Brass—

Brass. But look you!—Why what, d'ye think I'm a pickpocket? D'ye think I intend to run away with your note? your paltry note!

Gripe. I don't say so—I say only that in case—

Brass. Case, sir! there's no case but the case I have put you; and since you heap cases upon cases, where there is but three hundred rascally pounds in the case—I'll go and call a coach.

Gripe. Prithee don't be so testy; come, no more

words, follow me to my closet, and I'll give thee the money.

Brass. A terrible effort you make indeed; you are so much in love, your wits are all upon the wing, just a-going; and for three hundred pounds you put a stop to their flight. Sir, your wits are worth that, or your wits are worth nothing. Come away.

Gripe. Well say no more, thou shalt be satisfied. [*Exeunt.*

Re-enter DICK AMLET.

Dick. S't!—Brass! S't!—

Re-enter BRASS.

Brass. Well, sir!

Dick. 'Tis not well, sir, 'tis very ill, sir; we shall be all blown up.

Brass. What, with pride and plenty?

Dick. No, sir, with an officious slut that will spoil all. In short, Flippanta has been telling her mistress and Araminta of my passion for the young gentlewoman; and truly to oblige me (supposed no ill match by the by) they are resolved to propose it immediately to her father.

Brass. That's the devil! We shall come to par s and parchments, jointures and settlements, re ons meet on both sides; that's the devil!

ick. I intended this very day to propose to Flippanta the carrying her off: and I'm sure the young housewife would have tucked up her coats, and have marched.

Brass. Ay, with the body and the soul of her.

Dick. Why, then, what damned luck is this?

Brass. 'Tis your damned luck, not mine. I have always seen it in your ugly phiz, in spite of your powdered periwig.—Pox take ye!—he'll be hanged at last.—Why don't you try to get her off yet?

Dick. I have no money, you dog; you know you have stripped me of every penny.

Brass. Come, damn it, I'll venture one cargo more upon your rotten bottom: but if ever I see one glance of your hempen fortune again, I'm off of your partnership for ever.—I shall never thrive with him.

Dick. An impudent rogue! but he's in possession of my estate, so I must bear with him. [*Aside.*

Brass. Well, come, I'll raise a hundred pounds fory our use, upon my wife's jewels here.—[*Pulling out the necklace.*] Her necklace shall pawn for't.

Dick. Remember, though, that if things fail, I'm to have the necklace again; you know you agreed to that.

Brass. Yes, and if I make it good, you'll be the better for't; if not, I shall: so you see where the cause will pinch.

Dick. Why, you barbarous dog, you won't offer to—

Brass. No words now; about your business, march! Go stay for me at the next tavern: I'll go to Flippanta, and try what I can do for you.

Dick. Well, I'll go, but don't think to—O pox, sir!— [*Exit.*

Brass. Will you be gone? A pretty title you'd have to sue me upon truly, if I should have a mind to stand upon the defensive, as perhaps I may. I have done the rascal service enough to lull my conscience upon't I'm sure: but 'tis time enough for that. Let me see—first I'll go to Flippanta, and put a stop to this family way of match-making, then sell our necklace for what ready money 'twill produce; and by this time to-morrow I hope we shall be in possession of—t'other jewel here; a precious jewel, as she's set in gold: I believe for the stone itself we may part with't again to a friend—for a tester. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* GRIPE'S *House.*

Enter BRASS *and* FLIPPANTA.

Brass. Well, you agree I'm in the right, don't you?

Flip. I don't know; if your master has the estate he talks of, why not do't all above-board? Well, though I am not much of his mind, I'm much in his interest, and will therefore endeavour to serve him in his own way.

Brass. That's kindly said, my child, and I believe I shall reward thee one of these days, with as pretty a fellow to thy husband for't as—

Flip. Hold your prating Jackadandy, and leave me to my business.

Brass. I obey—adieu! [*Kisses her, and exit.*

Flip. Rascal!

Enter CORINNA.

Cor. Ah, Flippanta, I'm ready to sink down! my legs tremble under me, my dear Flippy!

Flip. And what's the affair?

Cor. My father's there within with my mother and Araminta; I never saw him in so good a humour in my life.

Flip. And is that it that frightens you so?

Cor. Ah, Flippanta, they are just going to speak to him about my marrying the colonel.

Flip. Are they so! so much the worse; they're too hasty.

Cor. O no, not a bit; I slipped out on purpose, you must know, to give 'em an opportunity; would 'twere done already!

Flip. I tell you no; get you in again immediately, and prevent it.

Cor. My dear, dear, I am not able; I never was in such a way before.

Flip. Never in a way to be married before, ha? is not that it?

Cor. Ah, Lord, if I'm thus before I come to't, Flippanta, what shall I be upon the very spot? Do but feel with what a thumpaty thump it goes. [*Putting her hand to her heart.*

Flip. Nay, it does make a filthy bustle, that's the truth on't, child. But I believe I shall make it leap another way when I tell you I'm cruelly afraid your father won't consent after all.

Cor. Why, he won't be the death o'me, will he?

Flip. I don't know, old folks are cruel; but we'll have a trick for him. Brass and I have been con-

sulting upon the matter, and agreed upon a surer way of doing it in spite of his teeth.

Cor. Ay, marry, sir, that were something.

Flip. But then he must not know a word of anything towards it.

Cor. No, no.

Flip. So, get you in immediately.

Cor. One, two, three, and away! [*Running off.*

Flip. And prevent your mother's speaking on't.

Cor. But is t'other way sure, Flippanta?

Flip. Fear nothing, 'twill only depend upon you.

Cor. Nay then—O ho! ho! ho! how pure that is! [*Exit.*

Flip. Poor child! we may do what we will with her, as far as marrying her goes: when that's over, 'tis possible she mayn't prove altogether so tractable. But who's here? my sharper, I think: yes.

Enter MONEYTRAP.

Mon. Well, my best friend, how go matters? Has the restitution been received, ha? Was she pleased with it?

Flip. Yes, truly; that is, she was pleased to see there was so honest a man in this immoral age.

Mon. Well, but a—does she know that 'twas I that—

Flip. Why, you must know I begun to give her a little sort of a hint, and—and so—why, and so she begun to put on a sort of a severe, haughty, reserved, angry, forgiving air. But soft; here she comes. You'll see how you stand with her presently: but don't be afraid. Courage!

Mon. He, hem!

Enter CLARISSA.

'Tis no small piece of good fortune, madam, to find you at home: I have often endeavoured it in vain.

Clar. 'Twas then unknown to me, for if I could often receive the visits of so good a friend at home, I should be more reasonably blamed for being so much abroad.

Mon. Madam, you make me—

Clar. You are the man of the world whose company I think is most to be desired. I don't compliment you when I tell you so, I assure you.

Mon. Alas, madam; your poor humble servant—

Clar. My poor humble servant however (with all the esteem I have for him) stands suspected with me for a vile trick I doubt he has played me, which if I could prove upon him I'm afraid I should punish him very severely.

Mon. I hope, madam, you'll believe I am not capable of—

Clar. Look you, look you, you are capable of whatever you please, you have a great deal of wit, and know how to give a nice and gallant turn to everything; but if you will have me continue your friend, you must leave me in some uncertainty in this matter.

Mon. Madam, I do then protest to you—

Clar. Come, protest nothing about it, I am but too penetrating, as you may perceive; but we sometimes shut our eyes rather than break with our friends; for a thorough knowledge of the truth of this business, would make me very seriously angry.

Mon. 'Tis very certain, madam, that—

Clar. Come, say no more on't, I beseech you, for I'm in a good deal of heat while I but think on't; if you'll walk in, I'll follow you presently.

Mon. Your goodness, madam, is—

Flip. [*Aside to* MONEYTRAP.] War horse! No fine speeches, you'll spoil all.

Mon. Thou art a most incomparable person.

Flip. Nay, it goes rarely; but get you in, and I'll say a little something to my lady for you while she's warm.

Mon. But s't, Flippanta, how long dost think she may hold out?

Flip. Phu! not a twelvemonth.

Mon. Boo!

Flip. Away, I say! [*Pushing him out.*

Clar. Is he gone? What a wretch it is! he never was quite such a beast before.

Flip. Poor mortal, his money's finely laid out truly!

Clar. I suppose there may have been much such another scene within between Araminta and my dear. But I left him so insupportably brisk 'tis impossible he can have parted with any money. I'm afraid Brass has not succeeded as thou hast done, Flippanta.

Flip. By my faith but he has, and better too; he presents his humble duty to Araminta, and has sent her—this. [*Showing the note.*

Clar. A bill from my love for two hundred and fifty pounds! The monster! he would not part with ten to save his lawful wife from everlasting torment.

Flip. Never complain of his avarice, madam, as long as you have his money.

Clar. But is not he a beast, Flippanta? methinks the restitution looked better by half.

Flip. Madam, the man's beast enough, that's certain; but which way will you go to receive his beastly money, for I must not appear with his note?

Clar. That's true; why send for Mrs. Amlet; that's a mighty useful woman that Mrs. Amlet.

Flip. Marry is she; we should have been basely puzzled how to dispose of the necklace without her, 'twould have been dangerous offering it to sale.

Clar. It would so, for I know your master has been laying out for't amongst the goldsmiths. But I stay here too long, I must in and coquette it a little more to my lover, Araminta will get ground on me else.

Flip. And I'll go send for Mrs. Amlet. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*Another Room in the same.*

ARAMINTA, CORINNA, GRIPE, *and* MONEYTRAP, *are discovered at a tea-table, very gay and laughing.*

All. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Mon. Mighty well, O mighty well indeed!

Enter CLARISSA.

Clar. Save you, save you, good folks! you are all in rare humour methinks.

Gripe. Why, what should we be otherwise for, madam?

Clar. Nay, I don't know, not I, my dear; but I han't had the happiness of seeing you so since our honeymoon was over, I think.

Gripe. Why to tell you the truth my dear, 'tis the joy of seeing you at home.—[*Kisses her.*] You see what charms you have when you are pleased to make use of 'em.

Aram. Very gallant truly.

Clar. Nay, and what's more, you must know, he's never to be otherwise henceforwards; we have come to an agreement about it.

Mon. Why, here's my love and I have been upon just such another treaty too.

Aram. Well, sure there's some very peaceful star rules at present. Pray Heaven continue its reign.

Mon. Pray do you continue its reign, you ladies; for 'tis all in your power. [*Leering at* CLARISSA.

Gripe. My neighbour Moneytrap says true, at least I'll confess frankly [*Ogling* ARAMINTA] 'tis in one lady's power to make me the best-humoured man on earth.

Mon. And I'll answer for another that has the same over me. [*Ogling* CLARISSA.

Clar. 'Tis mighty fine, gentlemen! mighty civil husbands, indeed!

Gripe. Nay, what I say's true, and so true, that all quarrels being now at an end, I am willing, if you please, to dispense with all that fine company we talked of to-day, be content with the friendly conversation of our two good neighbours here, and spend all my toying hours alone with my sweet wife.

Mon. Why, truly, I think now, if these good women pleased, we might make up the prettiest little neighbourly company between our two families, and set a defiance to all the impertinent people in the world.

Clar. The rascals! [*Aside.*

Aram. Indeed I doubt you'd soon grow weary, if we grew fond.

Gripe. Never, never, for our wives have wit, neighbour, and that never palls.

Clar. And our husbands have generosity, Araminta, and that seldom palls.

Gripe. So, that's a wipe for me now, because I did not give her a new-year's-gift last time; but be good, and I'll think of some tea-cups for you, next year.

Mon. And perhaps I mayn't forget a fan, or as good a thing—hum, hussy.

Clar. Well, upon these encouragements, Araminta, we'll try how good we can be.

Gripe. [*Aside.*] Well, this goes most rarely! Poor Moneytrap, he little thinks what makes his wife so easy in his company.

Mon. [*Aside.*] I can but pity poor neighbour Gripe. Lard, Lard, what a fool does his wife and I make of him!

Clar. [*Aside to* ARAMINTA.] Are not these two wretched rogues, Araminta?

Aram. [*Aside to* CLARISSA.] They are indeed.

Enter JESSAMIN.

Jes. Sir, here's Mr. Clip, the goldsmith, desires to speak with you.

Gripe. Cods so, perhaps some news of your necklace, my dear.

Clar. That would be news indeed.

Gripe. Let him come in. [*Exit* JESSAMIN.

Enter MR. CLIP.

Gripe. Mr. Clip, your servant; I'm glad to see you: how do you do?

Clip. At your service, sir, very well.—Your servant, madam Gripe.

Clar. Horrid fellow! [*Aside.*

Gripe. Well, Mr. Clip, no news yet of my wife's necklace?

Clip. If you please to let me speak with you in the next room, I have something to say to you.

Gripe. Ay, with all my heart. Shut the door after us.—[*They come forward, and the scene shuts behind them.*] Well, any news?

Clip. Look you, sir, here's a necklace brought me to sell, at least very like that you described to me.

Gripe. Let's see't.—*Victoria!* the very same. Ah, my dear Mr. Clip! [*Kisses him.*] But who brought it you? you should have seized him.

Clip. 'Twas a young fellow that I know: I can't tell whether he may be guilty, though it's like enough. But he has only left it me now, to show a brother of our trade, and will call upon me again presently.

Gripe. Wheedle him hither, dear Mr. Clip. Here's my neighbour Moneytrap in the house; he's a justice, and will commit him presently.

Clip. 'Tis enough.

Enter BRASS.

Gripe. O, my friend Brass!

Brass. Hold, sir, I think that's a gentleman I'm looking for.—Mr. Clip, oh, your servant! What, are you acquainted here? I have just been at your shop.

Clip. I only stepped here to show Mr. Gripe the necklace you left.

Brass. [*To* GRIPE.] Why, sir, do you understand jewels? I thought you had dealt only in gold. But I smoke the matter, hark you—a word in your ear—you are going to play the gallant again, and make a purchase on't for Araminta; ha, ha?

Gripe. Where had you the necklace?

Brass. Look you, don't trouble yourself about that; it's in commission with me, and I can help you to a pennyworth on't.

Gripe. A pennyworth on't, villain? [*Strikes at him.*

Brass. Villain! ahey, ahey! Is't you or me, Mr. Clip, he's pleased to compliment?

Clip. What do you think on't, sir?

Brass. Think on't! now the devil fetch me if I know what to think on't.

Gripe. You'll sell a pennyworth, rogue! of a thing you have stolen from me.

Brass. Stolen! pray, sir—what wine have you drank to-day? It has a very merry effect upon you.

Gripe. You villain! either give me an account how you stole it, or—

Brass. O ho, sir, if you please, don't carry your jest too far; I don't understand hard words, I give you warning on't. If you han't a mind to buy the necklace, you may let it alone; I know how to dispose on't. What a pox!—

Gripe. Oh, you shan't have that trouble, sir.—Dear Mr. Clip, you may leave the necklace here. I'll call at your shop, and thank you for your care.

Clip. Sir, your humble servant. [*Going.*

Brass. O ho, Mr. Clip, if you please sir, this won't do!—[*Stopping him.*] I don't understand raillery in such matters.

Clip. I leave it with Mr. Gripe do you and he dispute it. [*Exit.*

Brass. Ay, but 'tis from you, by your leave, sir, that I expect it. [*Going after him.*

Gripe. You expect, you rogue, to make your escape, do you? But I have other accounts besides this to make up with you. To be sure the dog has cheated me of two hundred and fifty pound. Come, villain, give me an account of—

Brass. Account of!—sir, give me an account of my necklace, or I'll make such a noise in your house I'll raise the devil in't.

Gripe. Well said, Courage!

Brass. Blood and thunder, give it me, or—

Gripe. Come, hush, be wise, and I'll make no noise of this affair.

Brass. You'll make no noise! but I'll make a noise, and a damned noise too. Oh, don't think to—

Gripe. I tell thee I will not hang thee.

Brass. But I tell you I will hang you, if you don't give me my necklace. I will, rot me!

Gripe. Speak softly, be wise; how came it thine? who gave it thee?

Brass. A gentleman, a friend of mine.

Gripe. What's his name?

Brass. His name!—I'm in such a passion I have forgot it.

Gripe. Ah, brazen rogue—thou hast stole it from my wife! 'tis the same she lost six weeks ago.

Brass. This has not been in England a month.

Gripe. You are a son of a whore.

Brass. Give me my necklace.

Gripe. Give me my two hundred and fifty pound note.

Brass. Yet I offer peace: one word without passion. The case stands thus, either I'm out of my wits, or you are out of yours: now 'tis plain I am not out of my wits, ergo—

Gripe. My bill, hang-dog, or I'll strangle thee! [*They struggle.*

Brass. Murder! murder!

Enter CLARISSA, ARAMINTA, CORINNA, FLIPPANTA, MONEYTRAP, *and* JESSAMIN.

Flip. What's the matter? what's the matter here?

Gripe. I'll matter him!

Clar. Who makes thee cry out thus, poor Brass?

Brass. Why, your husband, madam, he's in his altitudes here.

Gripe. Robber!

Brass. Here, he has cheated me of a diamond necklace.

Cor. Who, papa? ah, dear me!

Clar. Prithee what's the meaning of this great emotion, my dear?

Gripe. The meaning is that—I'm quite out of breath—this son of a whore has got your necklace, that's all.

Clar. My necklace!

Gripe. That birdlime there—stole it.

Clar. Impossible!

Brass. Madam, you see master's a little—touched, that's all. Twenty ounces of blood let loose would set all right again.

Gripe. Here, call a constable presently.—[*Exit* JESSAMIN.] Neighbour Moneytrap, you'll commit him?

Brass. D'ye hear? d'ye hear? See how wild he looks: how his eyes roll in his head! tie him down, or he'll do some mischief or other.

Gripe. Let me come at him.

Clar. Hold!—prithee, my dear, reduce things to a little temperance, and let us coolly into the secret of this disagreeable rupture.

Gripe. Well then, without passion. Why, you must know (but I'll have him hanged,) you must know that he came to Mr. Clip, to Mr. Clip the dog did!—with a necklace to sell; so Mr. Clip having notice before that (can you deny this, sirrah?) that you had lost yours, brings it to me. Look at it here, do you know it again?—Ah, you traitor! [*To* BRASS.

Brass. He makes me mad! Here's an appearance of something now to the company, and yet nothing in't in the bottom.

Enter Constable.

Clar. Flippanta!—
[*Aside to* FLIPPANTA, *showing the necklace.*

Flip. 'Tis it, faith; here's some mystery in this, we must look about us.

Clar. The safest way is point blank to disown the necklace.

Flip. Right, stick to that.

Gripe. Well, madam, do you know your old acquaintance, ha?

Clar. Why, truly, my dear, though (as you may all imagine) I should be very glad to recover so valuable a thing as my necklace, yet I must be just to all the world, this necklace is not mine.

Brass. Huzza!—Here, constable, do your duty. —Mr. Justice, I demand my necklace, and satisfaction of him.

Gripe. I'll die before I part with it, I'll keep it, and have him hanged.

Clar. But be a little calm, my dear, do, my bird, and then thou'lt be able to judge rightly of things.

Gripe. O good lack! O good lack!

Clar. No, but don't give way to fury and interest both, either of 'em are passions strong enough to lead a wise man out of the way. The necklace not being really mine, give it the man again, and come drink a dish of tea.

Brass. Ay, madam says right.

Gripe. Oons, if you with your addle head don't know your own jewels, I with my solid one do: and if I part with it, may famine be my portion!

Clar. But don't swear and curse thyself at this fearful rate: don't, my dove. Be temperate in your words, and just in all your actions, 'twill bring a blessing upon you and your family.

Gripe. Bring thunder and lightning upon me and my family, if I part with my necklace!

Clar. Why you'll have the lightning burn your house about your ears, my dear, if you go on in these practices.

Mon. A most excellent woman this! [*Aside.*

Enter MRS. AMLET.

Gripe. I'll keep my necklace.

Brass. Will you so? then here comes one has a title to it, if I han't.—[*Aside.*] Let Dick bring himself off with her as he can.—[*Aloud.*] Mrs. Amlet, you are come in a very good time; you lost

a necklace t'other day, and who do you think has got it?

Mrs. Aml. Marry that know I not, I wish I did.

Brass. Why then here's Mr. Gripe has it, and swears 'tis his wife's.

Gripe. And so I do, sirrah!—Look here, mistress, do you pretend this is yours?

Mrs. Aml. Not for the round world I would not say it; I only kept it, to do madam a small courtesy, that's all.

Clar. Ah, Flippanta, all will out now! [*Aside to* FLIPPANTA.

Gripe. Courtesy! what courtesy?

Mrs. Aml. A little money only that madam had present need of, please to pay me that, and I demand no more.

Brass. So here's fresh game; I have started a new hare, I find. [*Aside.*

Gripe. How, forsooth, is this true? [*To* CLARISSA.

Clar. You are in a humour at present, love, to believe anything, so I won't take the pains to contradict it.

Brass. This damned necklace will spoil all our affairs, this is Dick's luck again. [*Aside.*

Gripe. Are you not ashamed of these ways? Do you see how you are exposed before your best friends here? don't you blush at it?

Clar. I do blush, my dear, but 'tis for you, that here it should appear to the world, you keep me so bare of money, I'm forced to pawn my jewels.

Gripe. Impudent housewife! [*Raising his hand to strike her.*

Clar. Softly, chicken; you might have prevented all this by giving me the two hundred and fifty pound you sent to Araminta e'en now.

Brass. You see, sir, I delivered your note. How I have been abused to-day!

Gripe. I'm betrayed!—Jades on both sides, I see that! [*Aside.*

Mon. But, madam, madam, is this true I hear? Have you taken a present of two hundred and fifty pound? Pray what were you to return for these pounds, madam, ha?

Aram. Nothing, my dear; I only took 'em to reimburse you of about the same sum you sent to Clarissa.

Mon. Hum, hum, hum!

Gripe. How, gentlewoman, did you receive money from him?

Clar. Oh, my dear, 'twas only in jest; I knew you'd give it again to his wife.

Mrs. Aml. But amongst all this tintamar, I don't hear a word of my hundred pounds. Is it madam will pay me, or master?

Gripe. I pay! the devil shall pay!

Clar. Look you, my dear, malice apart, pay Mrs. Amlet her money, and I'll forgive you the wrong you intended my bed with Araminta. Am not I a good wife now?

Gripe. I burst with rage, and will get rid of this noose, though I tuck myself up in another.

Mon. Nay, pray, e'en tuck me up with you. [*Exeunt* MONEYTRAP *and* GRIPE.

Clar. and Aram. Bye, dearies!

Enter DICK AMLET.

Cor. Look, look, Flippanta, here's the colonel come at last!

Dick. Ladies, I ask your pardon, I have stayed so long, but—

Mrs. Aml. Ah, rogue's face, have I got thee, old Good-for-nought? Sirrah, sirrah, do you think to amuse me with your marriages, and your great fortunes? Thou hast played me a rare prank, by my conscience! Why, you ungracious rascal, what do you think will be the end of all this? Now Heaven forgive me, but I have a great mind to hang thee for't.

Cor. She talks to him very familiarly, Flippanta!

Flip. So methinks, by my faith!

Brass. Now the rogue's star is making an end of him. [*Aside.*

Dick. What shall I do with her? [*Aside.*

Mrs. Aml. Do but look at him, my dames: he has the countenance of a cherubim, but he's a rogue in his heart.

Clar. What is the meaning of all this, Mrs. Amlet?

Mrs. Aml. The meaning, good lack! Why this all-to-be-powdered rascal here is my son, an't please you.—Ha, Graceless! Now I'll make you own your mother, vermin!

Clar. What, the colonel your son?

Mrs. Aml. 'Tis Dick, madam, that rogue Dick I have so often told you of, with tears trickling down my old cheeks.

Aram. The woman's mad, it can never be.

Mrs. Aml. Speak, rogue, am I not thy mother, ha? Did I not bring thee forth? say then.

Dick. What will you have me say? you had a mind to ruin me, and you have done't; would you do any more!

Clar. Then, sir, you are son to good Mrs. Amlet?

Aram. And have had the assurance to put upon us all this while!

Flip. And the confidence to think of marrying Corinna?

Brass. And the impudence to hire me for your servant, who am as well born as yourself?

Clar. Indeed I think he should be corrected.

Aram. Indeed I think he deserves to be cudgelled.

Flip. Indeed I think he might be pumped.

Brass. Indeed I think he will be hanged.

Mrs. Aml. Good lack a-day! Good lack a-day! there's no need to be so smart upon him neither: if he is not a gentleman, he's a gentleman's fellow.—Come hither, Dick, they shan't run thee down neither; cock up thy hat, Dick, and tell 'em, though Mrs. Amlet is thy mother, she can make thee amends with ten thousand good pounds to buy thee some lands, and build thee a house in the midst on't.

All. How!

Clar. Ten thousand pounds, Mrs. Amlet!

Mrs. Aml. Yes forsooth, though I should lose the hundred you pawned your necklace for.—Tell 'em of that, Dick.

Cor. Look you, Flippanta, I can hold no longer, and I hate to see the young man abused.—And so, sir, if you please, I'm your friend and servant, and what's mine is yours; and when our estates are put together, I don't doubt but we shall do as well as the best of 'em.

Dick. Sayest thou so, my little queen? Why then if dear mother will give us her blessing, the parson shall give us a tack. We'll get her a score of grandchildren, and a merry house we'll make her. [*They kneel to* MRS. AMLET.

Mrs. Aml. Ah—ha! ha! ha! ha! the pretty pair, the pretty pair! Rise my chickens, rise, rise and face the proudest of 'em. And if madam does not deign to give her consent, a fig for her, Dick!—Why, how now?

Clar. Pray, Mrs. Amlet, don't be in a passion, the girl is my husband's girl, and if you can have his consent, upon my word you shall have mine, for anything belongs to him.

Flip. Then all's peace again, but we have been more lucky than wise.

Aram. And I suppose for us, Clarissa, we are to go on with our dears, as we used to do.

Clar. Just in the same tract, for this late treaty of agreement with 'em was so unnatural you see it could not hold. But 'tis just as well with us as if it had. Well, 'tis a strange fate, good folks! But while you live, everything gets well out of a broil but a husband. [*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. BARRY.

I'VE heard wise men in politics lay down
What feats by little England might be done,
Were all agreed, and all would act as one.
Ye wives a useful hint from this might take,
The heavy, old, despotic kingdom shake,
And make your matrimonial monsieurs quake.
Our heads are feeble, and we're cramp'd by laws;
Our hands are weak, and not too strong our cause:
Yet would those heads and hands, such as they are,
In firm confederacy resolve on war,
You'd find your tyrants—what I've found my dear.
What only two united can produce
You've seen to-night, a sample for your use:
Single, we found we nothing could obtain;
We join our force—and we subdued our men.
Believe me (my dear sex) they are not brave;
Try each your man; you'll quickly find your slave.
I know they'll make campaigns, risk blood and life;
But this is a more terrifying strife;
They'll stand a shot, who'll tremble at a wife.
Beat then your drums, and your shrill trumpets sound,
Let all your visits of your feats resound,
And deeds of war in cups of tea go round:
The stars are with you, fate is in your hand,
In twelve months' time you've vanquish'd half the land;
Be wise, and keep 'em under good command.
This year will to your glory long be known,
And deathless ballads hand your triumphs down;
Your late achievements ever will remain,
For though you cannot boast of many slain,
Your prisoners show you've made a brave campaign.

THE MISTAKE.

A Comedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON ALVAREZ, *Father to* LEONORA.
DON FELIX, *Father to* DON LORENZO.
DON CARLOS, *in love with* LEONORA.
DON LORENZO, *in love with* LEONORA.
METAPHRASTUS, *Tutor to* CAMILLO.
SANCHO, *Servant to* DON CARLOS.
LOPEZ, *Servant to* DON LORENZO.
TOLEDO, *a Bravo*.

LEONORA, *Daughter to* DON ALVAREZ.
CAMILLO, *supposed Son to* DON ALVAREZ.
ISABELLA, *her Friend*.
JACINTA, *Servant to* LEONORA.

SCENE,—A TOWN IN SPAIN.

PROLOGUE.

(WRITTEN BY MR. STEELE) SPOKEN BY MR. BOOTH.

OUR author's wit and raillery to-night
Perhaps might please, but that your stage-delight
No more is in your minds, but ears and sight.
With audiences composed of belles and beaux,
The first dramatic rule is, have good clothes.
To charm the gay spectator's gentle breast,
In lace and feather tragedy's express'd,
And heroes die unpitied, if ill dress'd.
The other style you full as well advance;
If 'tis a comedy, you ask—Who dance?
For oh! what dire convulsions have of late
Torn and distracted each dramatic state,
On this great question, which house first should sell
The new French steps, imported by Ruel?
Desbarques can't rise so high, we must agree,
They've half a foot in height more wit than we.
But though the genius of our learned age
Thinks fit to dance and sing quite off the stage.
True action, comic mirth, and tragic rage;
Yet as your taste now stands, our author draws
Some hopes of your indulgence and applause.
For that great end this edifice he made,
Where humble swain at lady's feet is laid;
Where the pleased nymph her conquer'd lover spies,
Then to glass pillars turns her conscious eyes,
And points anew each charm, for which he dies.
The Muse, before nor terrible nor great,
Enjoys by him this awful gilded seat:
By him theatric angels mount more high,
And mimic thunders shake a broader sky.
Thus all must own, our author has done more,
For your delight than ever bard before.
His thoughts are still to raise your pleasures fill'd
To write, translate, to blazon, or to build.
Then take him in the lump, nor nicely pry
Into small faults, that 'scape a busy eye;
But kindly, sirs, consider, he to-day
Finds you the house, the actors, and the play:
So, though we stage-mechanic rules omit,
You must allow it in a wholesale wit.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter DON CARLOS *and* SANCHO.

Don Car. I tell thee, I am not satisfied; I'm in love enough to be suspicious of everybody.

San. And yet methinks, sir, you should leave me out.

Don Car. It may be so, I can't tell; but I'm not at ease. If they don't make a knave, at least they'll make a fool of thee.

San. I don't believe a word on't. But good faith, master, your love makes somewhat of you; I don't know what 'tis, but methinks when you suspect me, you don't seem a man of half those parts I used to take you for. Look in my face, 'tis round and comely, not one hollow line of a villain in it. Men of my fabric don't use to be suspected for knaves; and when you take us for fools, we never take you for wise men. For my part, in this present case, I take myself to be

mighty deep. A stander-by, sir, sees more than a gamester. You are pleased to be jealous of your poor mistress without a cause. She uses you but too well, in my humble opinion. She sees you, and talks with you, till I am quite tired on't sometimes; and your rival, that you are so scared about, forces a visit upon her about once in a fortnight.

Don Car. Alas! thou art ignorant in these affairs: he that's the civilest received is often the least cared for. Women appear warm to one, to hide a flame for another. Lorenzo, in short, appears too composed of late to be a rejected lover; and the indifference he shows upon the favours I seem to receive from her, poisons the pleasure I else should taste in 'em, and keeps me on a perpetual rack. No! I would fain see some of his jealous transports; have him fire at the sight o' me, contradict me whenever I speak, affront me wherever he meets me, challenge me, fight me—

San. Run you through the guts.

Don Car. But he's too calm, his heart's too much at ease, to leave me mine at rest.

San. But, sir, you forget that there are two ways for our hearts to get at ease: when our mistresses come to be very fond of us, or we, not to care a fig for them. Now suppose, upon the rebukes you know he has had, it should chance to be the latter.

Don Car. Again thy ignorance appears. Alas! a lover who has broke his chain will shun the tyrant that enslaved him. Indifference never is his lot; he loves or hates for ever; and if his mistress prove another's prize, he cannot calmly see her in his arms.

San. For my part, master, I'm not so great a philosopher as you be, nor (thank my stars) so bitter a lover, but what I see—that I generally believe; and when Jacinta tells me she loves me dearly, I have good thoughts enough of my person never to doubt the truth on't. See, here the baggage comes.

Enter JACINTA *with a letter.*

Hist, Jacinta, my dear!

Jac. Who's that? Blunderbuss! Where's your master?

San. Hard by. [*Pointing to* DON CARLOS.

Jac. O, sir! I'm glad I have found you at last; I believe I have travelled five miles after you, and could neither find you at home, nor in the walks, nor at church, nor at the opera, nor—

San. Nor anywhere else, where he was not to be found. If you had looked for him where he was, 'twas ten to one but you had met with him.

Jac. I had, Jack-a-dandy!

Don Car. But, prithee, what's the matter? who sent you after me?

Jac. One who's never well but when she sees you, I think; 'twas my lady.

Don Car. Dear Jacinta, I fain would flatter myself, but am not able; the blessing's too great to be my lot. Yet 'tis not well to trifle with me: how short soe'er I am in other merit, the tenderness I have for Leonora claims something from her generosity. I should not be deluded.

Jac. And why do you think you are? methinks she's pretty well above-board with you. What must be done more to satisfy you?

San. Why, Lorenzo must hang himself, and then we are content.

Jac. How! Lorenzo!

San. If less will do, he'll tell you.

Jac. Why, you are not mad, sir, are you? Jealous of him! Pray which way may this have got into your head? I took you for a man of sense before.—[*To* SANCHO.] Is this your doings, Log?

San. No, forsooth, Pert! I'm not much given to suspicion, as you can tell, Mrs. Forward: if I were, I might find more cause, I guess, than your mistress has given our master here. But I have so many pretty thoughts of my own person, housewife, more than I have of yours, that I stand in dread of no man.

Jac. That's the way to prosper; however, so far I'll confess the truth to thee; at least, if that don't do, nothing else will. Men are mighty simple in love-matters, sir. When you suspect a woman's falling off, you fall a-plaguing her to bring her on again, attack her with reason, and a sour face. Udslife, sir! attack her with a fiddle, double your good-humour; give her a ball—powder your periwig at her—let her cheat you at cards a little—and I'll warrant all's right again. But to come upon a poor woman with the gloomy face of jealousy, before she gives the least occasion for't, is to set a complaisant rival in too favourable a light. Sir, sir! I must tell you, I have seen those have owed their success to nothing else.

Don Car. Say no more, I have been to blame; but there shall be no more on't.

Jac. I should punish you but justly, however, for what's past, if I carried back what I have brought you; but I'm good-natured, so here 'tis; open it, and see how wrong you timed your jealousy!

Don Car. [Reads.] *If you love me with that tenderness you have made me long believe you do, this letter will be welcome; 'tis to tell you, you have leave to plead a daughter's weakness to a father's indulgence: and if you prevail with him to lay his commands upon me, you shall be as happy as my obedience to 'em can make you.*

LEONORA.

Then I shall be what man was never yet.—[*Kissing the letter.*] Ten thousand blessings on thee for thy news!—I could adore thee as a deity!

[*Embracing* JACINTA.

San. True flesh and blood, every inch of her, for all that.

Don Car. [Reads again.] *And if you prevail with him to lay his commands upon me, you shall be as happy as my obedience to 'em can make you.*—O happy, happy Carlos!—But what shall I say to thee for this welcome message? Alas! I want words.—But let this speak for me, and this, and this, and— [*Giving her his ring, watch, and purse.*

San. Hold, sir; pray leave a little something for our board-wages.—[*To* JACINTA.] You can't carry 'em all, I believe: shall I ease thee of this?

[*Offering to take the purse.*

Jac. No; but you may carry—that, sirrah.

[*Giving him a box on the ear.*

San. The jade's grown purse-proud already.

Don Car. Well, dear Jacinta, say something to your charming mistress, that I am not able to say myself: but above all, excuse my late unpardonable folly, and offer her my life to expiate my crime.

Jac. The best plea for pardon will be never to repeat the fault.

Don Car. If that will do, 'tis sealed for ever.

Jac. Enough. But I must begone; success attend you with the old gentleman. Good-bye t'ye, sir.

Don Car. Eternal blessings follow thee! [*Exit* JACINTA.

San. I think she has taken 'em all with her; the jade has got her apron full.

Don Car. Is not that Lorenzo coming this way?

San. Yes, 'tis he; for my part now I pity the poor gentleman.

Enter DON LORENZO.

Don Car. I'll let him see at last I can be cheerful too.—Your servant, Don Lorenzo; how do you do this morning?

Don Lor. I thank you, Don Carlos, perfectly well, both in body and in mind.

Don Car. What! cured of your love then?

Don Lor. No, nor I hope I never shall. May I ask you how 'tis with yours?

Don Car. Increasing every hour; we are very constant both.

Don Lor. I find so much delight in being so I hope I never shall be otherwise.

Don Car. Those joys I am well acquainted with, but should lose 'em soon were I to meet a cool reception.

Don Lor. That's every generous lover's case, no doubt; an angel could not fire my heart but with an equal flame.

Don Car. And yet you said you still loved Leonora.

Don Lor. And yet I said I loved her.

Don Car. Does she then return you—

Don Lor. Everything my passion can require.

Don Car. Its wants are small, I find.

Don Lor. Extended as the heavens.

Don Car. I pity you.

Don Lor. He must be a deity that does so.

Don Car. Yet I'm a mortal, and once more can pity you.
Alas! Lorenzo,
'Tis a poor cordial to an aching heart,
To have the tongue alone announce it happy:
Besides 'tis mean, you should be more a man.

Don Lor. I find I have made you an unhappy one,
So can forgive the boilings of your spleen.

Don Car. This seeming calmness might have the effect your vanity proposes by it, had I not a testimony of her love would (should I show it) sink you to the centre.

Don Lor. Yet still I'm calm as ever.

Don Car. Nay, then have at your peace. Read that, and end the farce. [*Gives him* LEONORA'S *letter.*

Don Lor. [*After reading.*] I have read it.

Don Car. And know the hand?

Don Lor. 'Tis Leonora's; I have often seen it.

Don Car. I hope you then at last are satisfied.

Don Lor. [*Smiling.*] I am. Good morrow, Carlos! [*Exit.*

San. Sure he's mad, master.

Don Car. Mad! sayest thou?

San. And yet, by'r Lady, that was a sort of a dry sober smile at going off.

Don Car. A very sober one! Had he show me such a letter, I had put on another countenance.

San. Ay, o' my conscience had you.

Don Car. Here's mystery in this—I like it not.

San. I see his man and confidant there, Lopez. Shall I draw him on a Scotch pair of boots, master, and make him tell all?

Don Car. Some questions I must ask him; call him hither.

San. Hem, Lopez, hem!

Enter LOPEZ.

Lop. Who calls?

San. I and my master.

Lop. I can't stay.

San. You can indeed, sir. [*Laying hold on him.*

Don Car. Whither in such haste, honest Lopez? What! upon some love-errand?

Lop. Sir, your servant; I ask your pardon, but I was going—

Don Car. I guess where; but you need not be shy of me any more, thy master and I are no longer rivals; I have yielded up the cause; the lady will have it so, so I submit.

Lop. Is it possible, sir? Shall I then live to see my master and you friends again?

San. Yes; and what's better, thou and I shall be friends too. There will be no more fear of Christian bloodshed, I give thee up, Jacinta; she's a slippery housewife, so master and I are going to match ourselves elsewhere.

Lop. But is it possible, sir, your honour should be in earnest? I'm afraid you are pleased to be merry with your poor humble servant.

Don Car. I'm not at present much disposed to mirth, my indifference in this matter is not so thoroughly formed; but my reason has so far mastered my passion, to show me 'tis in vain to pursue a woman whose heart already is another's. 'Tis what I have so plainly seen of late, I have roused my resolution to my aid, and broke my chains for ever.

Lop. Well, sir, to be plain with you, this is the joyfullest news I have heard this long time; for I always knew you to be a mighty honest gentleman, and good faith it often went to the heart o' me to see you so abused. Dear, dear, have I often said to myself (when they have had a private meeting just after you have been gone)—

Don Car. Ha!

San. Hold, master, don't kill him yet. [*Aside to* DON CARLOS.

Lop. I say I have said to myself, what wicked things are women, and what pity it is they should be suffered in a Christian country! what a shame they should be allowed to play will-in-the-wisp with men of honour, and lead them through thorns and briars, and rocks, and rugged ways, till their hearts are torn in pieces, like an old coat in a fox-chase! I say, I have said to myself—

Don Car. Thou hast said enough to thyself, but say a little more to me. Where were these secret meetings thou talkest of?

Lop. In sundry places, and by divers ways; sometimes in the cellar, sometimes in the garret, sometimes in the court, sometimes in the gutter; but the place where the kiss of kisses was given was—

Don Car. In hell!

Lop. Sir!

Don Car. Speak, fury, what dost thou mean by the kiss of kisses?

Lop. The kiss of peace, sir; the kiss of union; the kiss of consummation.

Don Car. Thou liest, villain!

Lop. I don't know but I may, sir.—[*Aside.*] What the devil's the matter now!

Don Car. There's not one word of truth in all thy cursed tongue has uttered.

Lop. No, sir, I—I—believe there is not.

Don Car. Why then didst thou say it, wretch?

Lop. Oh—only in jest, sir.

Don Car. I am not in a jesting condition.

Lop. Nor I—at present, sir.

Don Car. Speak then the truth, as thou wouldst do it at the hour of death.

Lop. Yes, at the gallows, and be turned off as soon as I've done. [*Aside.*

Don Car. What's that you murmur?

Lop. Nothing but a short prayer.

Don Car. [*Aside.*] I am distracted, and fright the wretch from telling me what I am upon the rack to know.—[*Aloud.*] Forgive me, Lopez, I am to blame to speak thus harshly to thee. Let this obtain thy pardon.—[*Gives him money.*] Thou seest I am disturbed.

Lop. Yes, sir, I see I have been led into a snare; I have said too much.

Don Car. And yet thou must say more; nothing can lessen my torment but a farther knowledge of what causes my misery. Speak then! have I anything to hope?

Lop. Nothing; but that you may be a happier bachelor than my master may probably be a married man.

Don Car. Married, sayest thou?

Lop. I did, sir, and I believe he'll say so too in a twelvemonth.

Don Car. O torment!—But give me more on't: when, how, to who, where?

Lop. Yesterday, to Leonora, by the parson in the pantry.

Don Car. Look to't, if this be false, thy life shall pay the torment thou hast given me. Begone!

Lop. With the body and the soul o'me. [*Exit.*

San. Base news, master.

Don Car. Now my insulting rival's smile speaks out: O cursed, cursed woman!

Re-enter JACINTA.

Jac. I'm come in haste to tell you, sir, that as soon as the moon's up, my lady'll give you a meeting in the close-walk by the back-door of the garden; she thinks she has something to propose to you will certainly get her father's consent to marry you.

Don Car. Past sufferance!
This aggravation is not to be borne.
Go, thank her—with my curses. Fly!—
And let 'em blast her, while their venom's strong. [*Exit.*

Jac. Won't thou explain? What's this storm for?

San. And darest thou ask me questions, smooth-faced iniquity, crocodile of Nile, siren of the rocks! Go, carry back the too gentle answer thou hast received; only let me add with the poet:—
We are no fools, trollop, my master, nor me;
And thy mistress may go—to the devil with thee. [*Exit.*

Jac. Am I awake!—I fancy not; a very idle dream this. Well: I'll go talk in my sleep to my lady about it; and when I awake, we'll try what interpretation we can make on't. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An open court near the House of* DON ALVAREZ.

Enter CAMILLO *and* ISABELLA.

Isab. How can you doubt my secrecy? have you not proofs of it?

Cam. Nay, I am determined to trust you; but are we safe here? can nobody overhear us?

Isab. Safer much than in a room. Nobody can come within hearing before we see 'em.

Cam. And yet how hard 'tis for me to break silence!

Isab. Your secret sure must be of great importance.

Cam. You may be sure it is, when I confess 'tis with regret I own it e'en to you; and, were it possible, you should not know it.

Isab. 'Tis frankly owned indeed; but 'tis not kind, perhaps not prudent, after what you know I already am acquainted with. Have I not been bred up with you? and am I ignorant of a secret which, were it known—

Cam. Would be my ruin; I confess it would. I own you know why both my birth and sex are thus disguised; you know how I was taken from my cradle to secure the estate which had else been lost by young Camillo's death; but which is now safe in my supposed father's hands, by my passing for his son; and 'tis because you know all this, I have resolved to open farther wonders to you. But, before I say any more, you must resolve one doubt, which often gives me great disturbance; whether Don Alvarez ever was himself privy to the mystery which has disguised my sex, and made me pass for his son?

Isab. What you ask me is a thing has often perplexed my thoughts as well as yours, nor could my mother ever resolve the doubt. You know when that young child Camillo died, in whom was wrapped up so much expectation, from the great estate his uncle's will (even before he came into the world) had left him; his mother made a secret of his death to her husband Alvarez, and readily fell in with a proposal made her to take you (who then were just Camillo's age) and bring you up in his room. You have heard how you were then at nurse with my mother, and how your own was privy and consenting to the plot; but Don Alvarez was never let into it by 'em.

Cam. Don't you then think it probable his wife might after tell him?

Isab. 'Twas ever thought nothing but a death-bed repentance could draw it from her to any one; and that was prevented by the suddenness of her exit to t'other world, which did not give her even time to call Heaven's mercy on her. And yet, now I have said all this, I own the correspondence and friendship I observe he holds with your real mother gives me some suspicion, and the presents he often makes her (which people seldom do for

nothing) confirm it. But, since this is all I can say to you on that point, pray let us come to the secret, which you have made me impatient to hear.

Cam. Know, then, that though Cupid is blind, he is not to be deceived: I can hide my sex from the world, but not from him; his dart has found the way through the manly garb I wear, to pierce a virgin's tender heart.—I love—

Isab. How!

Cam. Nay, ben't surprised at that, I have other wonders for you.

Isab. Quick, let me hear 'em.

Cam. I love Lorenzo.

Isab. Lorenzo! Most nicely hit! The very man from whom your imposture keeps this vast estate; and who, on the first knowledge of your being a woman, would enter into possession of it. This is indeed a wonder.

Cam. Then, wonder farther still, I am his wife.

Isab. Ha! his wife!

Isab. His wife, Isabella; and yet thou hast not all my wonders, I am his wife without his knowledge: he does not even know I am a woman.

Isab. Madam, your humble servant; if you please to go on, I won't interrupt you, indeed I won't.

Cam. Then hear how these strange things have passed: Lorenzo, bound unregarded in my sister's chains, seemed in my eyes a conquest worth her care. Nor could I see him treated with contempt without growing warm in his interest: I blamed Leonora for not being touched with his merit; I blamed her so long, till I grew touched with it myself: and the reasons I urged to vanquish her heart insensibly made a conquest of my own. 'Twas thus, my friend, I fell. What was next to be done my passion pointed out; my heart I felt was warmed to a noble enterprise, I gave it way, and boldly on it led me. Leonora's name and voice, in the dark shades of night, I borrowed, to engage the object of my wishes. I met him, Isabella, and so deceived him; he cannot blame me sure, for much I blessed him. But to finish this strange story: in short, I owned I long had loved; but, finding my father most averse to my desires, I at last had forced myself to this secret correspondence;
I urged the mischiefs would attend the knowledge on't,
I urged 'em so, he thought 'em full of weight,
So yielded to observe what rules I gave him.
They were, to pass the day with cold indifference,
To avoid even sign or looks of intimacy,
But gather for the still, the secret night,
A flood of love
To recompense the losses of the day.
I will not trouble you with lovers' cares,
Nor what contrivances we form'd to bring
This toying to a solid bliss.
Know only, when three nights we thus had pass'd,
The fourth
It was agreed should make us one for ever;
Each kept their promise, and last night has join'd us.

Isab. Indeed your talents pass my poor extent;
You serious ladies are well form'd for business.
What wretched work a poor coquette had made on't!
But still there's that remains will try your skill;
You have your man, but—

Cam. Lovers think no farther. The object of that passion possesses all desire. However, I have opened to you my wondrous situation, if you can advise me in my difficulties to come, you will. But see—my husband!

Enter Don Lorenzo.

Don Lor. You look as if you were busy; pray tell me if I interrupt you; I'll retire.

Cam. No, no, you have a right to interrupt us, since you were the subject of our discourse.

Don Lor. Was I?

Cam. You were; nay, I'll tell you how you entertained us too.

Don Lor. Perhaps I had as good avoid hearing that.

Cam. You need not fear, it was not to your disadvantage; I was commending you, and saying, if I had been a woman, I had been in danger; nay I think I said I should infallibly have been in love with you.

Don Lor. While such an if is in the way, you run no great risk in declaring; but you'd be finely catched now, should some wonderful transformation give me a claim to your heart.

Cam. Not sorry for't at all, for I ne'er expect to find a mistress please me half so well as you would do, if I were yours.

Don Lor. Since you are so well inclined to me in your wishes, sir, I suppose (as the fates have ordained it) you would have some pleasure in helping me to a mistress, since you can't be mine yourself.

Cam. Indeed I should not.

Don Lor. Then my obligation is but small to you.

Cam. Why, would you have a woman, that is in love with you herself, employ her interest to help you to another?

Don Lor. No, but you being no woman might.

Cam. Sir, 'tis as a woman I say what I do, and I suppose myself a woman when I design all these favours to you. Therefore, out of that supposition, I have no other good intentions to you than you may expect from any one that says, he's—sir, your humble servant.

Don Lor. So, unless Heaven is pleased to work a miracle, and from a sturdy young fellow make you a kind-hearted young lady, I'm to get little by your good opinion of me.

Cam. Yes, there is one means yet left (on this side a miracle) that would perhaps engage me, if with an honest oath you could declare, were I woman, I might dispute your heart, even with the first of my pretending sex.

Don Lor. Then solemnly and honestly I swear, that had you been a woman, and I the master of the world, I think I should have laid it at your feet.

Cam. Then honestly and solemnly I swear, henceforwards all your interest shall be mine.

Don Lor. I have a secret to impart to you will quickly try your friendship.

Cam. I have a secret to unfold to you will put you even to a fiery trial.

Don Lor. What do you mean, Camillo?

Cam. I mean that I love where I never durst yet own it, yet where 'tis in your power to make me the happiest of—

Don Lor. Explain, Camillo; and be assured, if your happiness is in my power, 'tis in your own.

Cam. Alas! you promise me you know not what.

Don Lor. I promise nothing but what I will perform; name the person.

Cam. 'Tis one who's very near to you.

Don Lor. If 'tis my sister, why all this pain in bringing forth the secret?

Cam. Alas! it is your—

Don Lor. Speak!

Cam. I cannot yet; farewell!

Don Lor. Hold! pray speak it now.

Cam. I must not: but when you tell me your secret, you shall know mine.

Don Lor. Mine is not in my power, without the consent of another.

Cam. Get that consent, and then we'll try who best will keep their oaths.

Don Lor. I am content.

Cam. And I. Adieu!

Don Lor. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Enter LEONORA *and* JACINTA.

Leo. 'Tis enough: I will revenge myself this way, if it does but torment him. I shall be content to find no other pleasure in it.—Brother, you'll wonder at my change; after all my ill usage of Lorenzo, I am determined to be his wife.

Cam. How, sister! so sudden a turn? This inequality of temper indeed is not commendable.

Leo. Your change, brother, is much more justly surprising; you hitherto have pleaded for him strongly; accused me of blindness, cruelty, and pride; and now I yield to your reasons, and resolve in his favour, you blame my compliance, and appear against his interest.

Cam. I quit his service for what's dearer to me, yours. I have learned from sure intelligence, the attack he made on you was but a feint, and that his heart is in another's chain: I would not therefore see you so exposed, to offer up yourself to one who must refuse you.

Leo. If that be all, leave me my honour to take care of; I am no stranger to his wishes; he won't refuse me, brother, nor I hope will you, to tell him of my resolution: if you do, this moment with my own tongue (through all a virgin's blushes) I'll own to him I am determined in his favour.—You pause as if you'd let the task lie on me.

Cam. Neither on you, nor me; I have a reason you are yet a stranger to.
Know then there is a virgin young and tender,
Whose peace and happiness so much are mine,
I cannot see her miserable;
She loves him with that torrent of desire,
That were the world resign'd her in his stead,
She'd still be wretched.
I will not pique you to a female strife,
By saying you have not charms to tear him from her;
But I would move you to a female softness,
By telling you her death would wait your conquest.
What I have more to plead is as a brother,
I hope that gives me some small interest in you;
Whate'er it is, you see how I'd employ it.

Leo. You ne'er could put it to a harder service.
I beg a little time to think: pray leave me to myself a while.

Cam. I shall; I only ask that you would think,
And then you won't refuse me.
[*Exeunt* CAMILLO *and* ISABELLA.

Jac. Indeed, madam, I'm of your brother's mind, though for another cause; but sure 'tis worth thinking twice on for your own sake. You are too violent.

Leo. A slighted woman knows no bounds. Vengeance is all the cordial she can have, so snatches at the nearest. Ungrateful wretch! to use me with such insolence.

Jac. You see me as much enraged at it as you are yourself, yet my brain is roving after the cause, for something there must be; never letter was received by man with more passion and transport; I was almost as charming a goddess as yourself, only for bringing it. Yet when in a moment after I come with a message worth a dozen on't, never was witch so handled; something must have passed between one and t'other, that's sure.

Leo. Nothing could pass worth my inquiring after, since nothing could happen that can excuse his usage of me; he had a letter under my hand which owned him master of my heart; and till I contradicted it with my mouth he ought not to doubt the truth on't.

Jac. Nay, I confess, madam, I han't a word to say for him, I'm afraid he's but a rogue at bottom, as well as my Shameless that attends him; we are bit, by my troth, and haply well enough served, for listening to the glib tongues of the rascals. But be comforted, madam; they'll fall into the hands of some foul sluts or other, before they die, that will set our account even with 'em.

Leo. Well, let him laugh; let him glory in what he has done: he shall see I have a spirit can use him as I ought.

Jac. And let one thing be your comfort by the way, madam, that in spite of all your dear affections to him, you have had the grace to keep him at arm's end. You han't thanked me for't; but good faith 'twas well I did not stir out of the chamber that fond night. For there are times the stoutest of us are in danger, the rascals wheedle so.

Leo. In short my very soul is fired with his treatment: and if ever that perfidious monster should relent, though he should crawl like a poor worm beneath my feet, nay, plunge a dagger in his heart, to bleed for pardon; I charge thee strictly, charge thee on thy life, thou do not urge a look to melt me toward him, but strongly buoy me up in brave resentment; and if thou seest (which Heavens avert!) a glance of weakness in me, rouse to my memory the vile wrongs I've borne, and blazon them with skill in all their glaring colours.

Jac. Madam, never doubt me; I'm charged to the mouth with fury, and if ever I meet that fat traitor of mine, such a volley will I pour about his ears!—Now Heaven prevent all hasty vows; but in the humour I am, methinks I'd carry my maidenhead to my cold grave with me, before I'd let it simper at the rascal. But soft! here comes your father.

Enter DON ALVAREZ.

Don Alv. Leonora, I'd have you retire a little, and send your brother's tutor to me, Metaphrastus.—[*Exeunt* LEONORA *and* JACINTA.] I'll try if I can discover, by his tutor, what 'tis that seems so much to work his brain of late; for something more than common there plainly does appear, yet nothing sure that can disturb his soul, like what I have to torture mine on his account. Sure nothing in this world is worth a troubled mind! What racks has avarice stretched me on! I wanted

nothing: kind Heaven had given me a plenteous lot, and seated me[1] in great abundance. Why then approve I of this imposture? What have I gained by it? Wealth and misery. I have bartered peaceful days for restless nights; a wretched bargain! and he that merchandises thus must be undone at last.

Enter METAPHRASTUS.

Metaph. *Mandatum tuum curo diligenter.*

Don Alv. Master, I had a mind to ask you—

Metaph. The title, master, comes from *magis* and *ter*, which is as much as to say, *thrice worthy.*

Don Alv. I never heard so much before, but it may be true for aught I know. But, master—

Metaph. Go on.

Don Alv. Why so I will if you'll let me, but don't interrupt me then.

Metaph. Enough, proceed.

Don Alv. Why then, master, for the third time, my son Camillo gives me much uneasiness of late; you know I love him, and have many careful thoughts about him.

Metaph. 'Tis true. *Filio non potest præferri, nisi filius.*

Don Alv. Master, when one has business to talk on, these scholastic expressions are not of use; I believe you a great Latinist; possibly you may understand Greek; those who recommended you to me, said so, and I am willing it should be true: but the thing I want to discourse you about at present, does not properly give you an occasion to display your learning. Besides, to tell you truth, 'twill at all times be lost upon me; my father was a wise man, but he taught me nothing beyond common sense; I know but one tongue in the world, which luckily being understood by you as well as me, I fancy whatever thoughts we have to communicate to one another, may reasonably be conveyed in that, without having recourse to the language of Julius Cæsar.

Metaph. You are wrong, but may proceed.

Don Alv. I thank you. What is the matter I do not know; but though it is of the utmost consequence to me to marry my son, what match soever I propose to him, he still finds some pretence or other to decline it.

Metaph. He is, perhaps, of the humour of a brother of Marcus Tullius, who—

Don Alv. Dear master, leave the Greeks and the Latins, and the Scotch and the Welsh, and let me go on in my business; what have those people to do with my son's marriage?

Metaph. Again you are wrong; but go on.

Don Alv. I say then, that I have strong apprehensions, from his refusing all my proposals, that he may have some secret inclination of his own; and to confirm me in this fear, I yesterday observed him (without his knowing it) in a corner of the grove where nobody comes—

Metaph. A place out of the way, you would say; a place of retreat.

Don Alv. Why, the corner of the grove, where nobody comes, is a place of retreat, is it not?

Metaph. In Latin, *secessus.*

Don Alv. Ha!

Metaph. As Virgil has it, *Est in secessu locus.*

Don Alv. How could Virgil have it, when I tell you no soul was there but he and I?

Metaph. Virgil is a famous author; I quote his saying as a phrase more proper to the occasion than that you use, and not as one who was in the wood with you.

Don Alv. And I tell you, I hope to be as famous as any Virgil of 'em all, when I have been dead as long, and have no need of a better phrase than my own to tell you my meaning.

Metaph. You ought however to make choice of the words most used by the best authors. *Tu vivendo bonos,* as they say, *scribendo sequare peritos.*

Don Alv. Again!

Metaph. 'Tis Quintilian's own precept.

Don Alv. Oons!

Metaph. And he has something very learned upon it, that may be of service to you to hear.

Don Alv. You son of a whore, will you hear me speak?

Metaph. What may be the occasion of this unmanly passion? What is it you would have with me?

Don Alv. What you might have known an hour ago, if you had pleased.

Metaph. You would then have me hold my peace—I shall.

Don Alv. You will do very well.

Metaph. You see I do; well, go on.

Don Alv. Why then, to begin once again, I say my son Camillo—

Metaph. Proceed; I shan't interrupt you.

Don Alv. I say, my son Camillo—

Metaph. What is it you say of your son Camillo?

Don Alv. That he has got a dog of a tutor, whose brains I'll beat out if he won't hear me speak.

Metaph. That dog is a philosopher, contemns passion, and yet will hear you.

Don Alv. I don't believe a word on't, but I'll try once again. I have a mind to know from you, whether you have observed anything in my son—

Metaph. Nothing that is like his father. Go on.

Don Alv. Have a care!

Metaph. I do not interrupt you; but you are long in coming to a conclusion.

Don Alv. Why, thou hast not let me begin yet!

Metaph. And yet it is high time to have made an end.

Don Alv. Dost thou know thy danger? I have not—thus much patience left.

[*Showing the end of his finger.*

Metaph. Mine is already consumed. I do not use to be thus treated; my profession is to teach, and not to hear, yet I have hearkened like a schoolboy, and am not heard, although a master.

Don Alv. Get out of the room!

Metaph. I will not. If the mouth of a wise man be shut, he is, as it were, a fool; for who shall know his understanding? Therefore a certain philosopher said well, Speak, that thou mayest be known; great talkers, without knowledge, are as the winds that whistle; but they who have learning should speak aloud. If this be not permitted, we may expect to see the whole order of nature o'erthrown; hens devour foxes, and lambs destroy wolves, nurses suck children, and children give suck; generals mend stockings, and chambermaids take towns; we may expect, I say—

Don Alv. That, and that, and that, and—

[*Strikes him and kicks him.*

Metaph. *O tempora! O mores!*

[*Exit,* DON ALVAREZ *following him with a bell at his ear.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Street before the House of* DON ALVAREZ.

Enter LOPEZ.

Lop. Sometimes Fortune seconds a bold design, and when folly has brought us into a trap, impudence brings us out on't. I have been caught by this hot-headed lover here, and have told like a puppy what I shall be beaten for like a dog. Come! courage, my dear Lopez; fire will fetch out fire. Thou hast told one body thy master's secret, e'en tell it to half-a-dozen more, and try how that will thrive; go tell it to the two old Dons, the lovers' fathers. The thing's done, and can't be retrieved; perhaps they'll lay their two ancient heads together, club a pennyworth of wisdom a-piece, and with great penetration at last find out that 'tis best to submit where 'tis not in their power to do otherwise. This being resolved, there's no time to be lost. [*Knocks at* DON ALVAREZ'S *door.*

Don Alv. [*Within.*] Who knocks?

Lop. Lopez.

Don Alv. [*Looking out.*] What dost want?

Lop. To bid you good-morrow, sir.

Don Alv. Well, good-morrow to thee again. [*Retires.*

Lop. What a—I think he does not care for my company. [*Knocks again.*

Don Alv. [*Within.*] Who knocks?

Lop. Lopez.

Don Alv. [*Looking out.*] What wouldst have?

Lop. My old master, sir, gives his service to you, and desires to know how you do.

Don Alv. How I do! why, well; how should I do? Service to him again. [*Retires.*

Lop. Sir!

Don Alv. [*Returning.*] What the deuse wouldst thou have with me, with thy good-morrows and thy services?

Lop. [*Aside.*] This man does not understand good breeding, I find.—[*Aloud.*] Why, sir, my master has some very earnest business with you.

Don Alv. Business! about what? What business can he have with me?

Lop. I don't know, truly; but 'tis some very important matter. He has just now (as I hear) discovered some great secret, which he must needs talk with you about.

Don Alv. Ha! a secret, sayest thou?

Lop. Yes; and bid me bring him word if you were at home, he'd be with you presently. Sir, your humble servant. [*Exit.*

Enter DON ALVAREZ, *from the house.*

Don Alv. A secret; and must speak with me about it! Heavens, how I tremble! What can this message mean? I have very little acquaintance with him, what business can he have with me? An important secret 'twas, he said, and that he had just discovered it. Alas! I have in the world but one, if it be that—I'm lost; an eternal blot must fix upon me. How unfortunate am I, that I have not followed the honest counsels of my heart, which have often urged me to set my conscience at ease, by rendering to him the estate that is his due, and which by a foul imposture I keep from him! But 'tis now too late; my villany is out, and I shall not only be forced with shame to restore him what is his, but shall be perhaps condemned to make him reparation with my own. O terrible view!

Enter DON FELIX.

Don Fel. [*Aside.*] My son to go and marry her without her father's knowledge! This can never end well. I don't know what to do, he'll conclude I was privy to it, and his power and interest are so great at court he may with ease contrive my ruin: I tremble at his sending to speak with me.—Mercy on me, there he is!

Don Alv. [*Aside.*] Ah! shield me, kind Heaven! there's Don Felix come. How I am struck with the sight of him! Oh, the torment of a guilty mind!

Don Fel. What shall I say to soften him? [*Aside.*

Don Alv. How shall I look him in the face? [*Aside.*

Don Fel. 'Tis impossible he can forgive it. [*Aside.*

Don Alv. To be sure he'll expose me to the whole world. [*Aside.*

Don Fel. I see his countenance change. [*Aside.*

Don Alv. With what contempt he looks upon me! [*Aside.*

Don Fel. I see, Don Alvarez, by the disorder of your face you are but too well informed of what brings me here.

Don Alv. 'Tis true.

Don Fel. The news may well surprise you, 'tis what I have been far from apprehending.

Don Alv. Wrong, very wrong, indeed.

Don Fel. The action is certainly to the last point to be condemned, and I think nobody should pretend to excuse the guilty.

Don Alv. They are not to be excused, though Heaven may have mercy.

Don Fel. That's what I hope you will consider.

Don Alv. We should act as Christians.

Don Fel. Most certainly.

Don Alv. Let mercy then prevail.

Don Fel. It is indeed of heavenly birth.

Don Alv. Generous Don Felix!

Don Fel. Too indulgent Alvarez!

Don Alv. I thank you on my knee.

Don Fel. 'Tis I ought to have been there first. [*They kneel.*

Don Alv. Is it then possible we are friends?

Don Fel. Embrace me to confirm it. [*They embrace.*

Don Alv. Thou best of men!

Don Fel. Unlooked-for bounty!

Don Alv. [*Rising.*] Did you know the torment this unhappy action has given me—

Don Fel. 'Tis impossible it could do otherwise; nor has my trouble been less.

Don Alv. But let my misfortune be kept secret.

Don Fel. Most willingly; my advantage is sufficient by it, without the vanity of making it public to the world.

Don Alv. [*Aside.*] Incomparable goodness! That I should thus have wronged a man so worthy!—[*Aloud.*] My honour then is safe?

Don Fel. For ever, even for ever let it be a secret, I am content.

Don Alv. [*Aside.*] Noble gentleman!—[*Aloud.*] As to what advantages ought to accrue to you by it, it shall be all to your entire satisfaction.

Don Fel. [*Aside.*] Wonderful bounty!—[*Aloud.*] As to that, Don Alvarez, I leave it entirely to you, and shall be content with whatever you think reasonable.

Don Alv. I thank you, from my soul I must, you know I must.—[*Aside.*] This must be an angel, not a man.

Don Fel. The thanks lie on my side, Alvarez, for this unexpected generosity; but may all faults be forgot, and Heaven ever prosper you!

Don Alv. The same prayer I, with a double fervour, offer up for you.

Don Fel. Let us then once more embrace, and be forgiveness sealed for ever.

Don Alv. Agreed; thou best of men, agreed. [*They embrace.*

Don Fel. This thing then being thus happily terminated, let me own to you, Don Alvarez, I was in extreme apprehensions of your utmost resentment on this occasion; for I could not doubt but you had formed more happy views in the disposal of so fair a daughter as Leonora, than my poor son's inferior fortune e'er can answer: but since they are joined, and that—

Don Alv. Ha!

Don Fel. Nay, 'tis very likely to discourse of it may not be very pleasing to you, though your christianity and natural goodness have prevailed on you so generously to forgive it. But to do justice to Leonora, and screen her from your too harsh opinion in this unlucky action, 'twas that cunning wicked creature that attends her, who by unusual arts wrought her to this breach of duty, for her own inclinations were disposed to all the modesty and resignation a father could ask from a daughter; my son I can't excuse, but since your bounty does so, I hope you'll quite forget the fault of the less-guilty Leonora.

Don Alv. [*Aside.*] What a mistake have I lain under here! and from a groundless apprehension of one misfortune, find myself in the certainty of another.

Don Fel. He looks disturbed; what can this mean? [*Aside.*

Don Alv. [*Aside.*] My daughter married to his son!—Confusion! But I find myself in such unruly agitation, something wrong may happen if I continue with him; I'll therefore leave him.

Don Fel. You seem thoughtful, sir; I hope there's no—

Don Alv. A sudden disorder I am seized with; you'll pardon me, I must retire. [*Exit.*

Don Fel. I don't like this:—he went oddly off.—I doubt he finds this bounty difficult to go through with. His natural resentment is making an attack upon his acquired generosity: pray Heaven it ben't too strong for't. The misfortune is a great one, and can't but touch him nearly. It was not natural to be so calm; I wish it don't yet drive him to my ruin. But here comes this young hot-brained coxcomb, who with his midnight amours has been the cause of all this mischief to me.

Enter Don Lorenzo.

So, sir, are you come to receive my thanks for your noble exploit? You think you have done bravely now, ungracious offspring, to bring perpetual troubles on me! Must there never pass a day, but I must drink some bitter potion or other of your preparation for me?

Don Lor. I am amazed, sir; pray what have I done to deserve your anger?

Don Fel. Nothing, no manner of thing in the world; nor never do. I am an old testy fellow, and am always scolding, and finding fault for nothing; complaining that I have got a coxcomb of a son that makes me weary of my life, fancying he perverts the order of nature, turning day into night, and night into day; getting whims in my brain, that he consumes his life in idleness, unless he rouses now and then to do some noble stroke of mischief; and having an impertinent dream at this time, that he has been making the fortune of the family, by an underhand marriage with the daughter of a man who will crush us all to powder for it. Ah—ungracious wretch, to bring an old man into all this trouble! The pain thou gavest thy mother to bring thee into the world, and the plague thou hast given me to keep thee here, make the getting thee (though 'twas in our honey-moon) a bitter remembrance to us both. [*Exit.*

Don Lor. So, all's out!—Here's a noble storm arising, and I'm at sea in a cock-boat! But which way could this business reach him? by this traitor Lopez—it must be so; it could be no other way; for only he, and the priest that married us, know of it. The villain will never confess though: I must try a little address with him, and conceal my anger.—Oh! here he comes.

Re-enter Lopez.

Lopez!

Lop. Do you call, sir?

Don Lor. I find all's discovered to my father; the secret's out; he knows my marriage.

Lop. He knows your marriage!—How the pest should that happen? Sir, 'tis impossible!—that's all.

Don Lor. I tell thee 'tis true; he knows every particular of it.

Lop. He does!—Why then, sir, all I can say is, that Satan and he are better acquainted than the devil and a good Christian ought to be.

Don Lor. Which way he has discovered it I can't tell, nor am I much concerned to know, since, beyond all my expectations, I find him perfectly easy at it, and ready to excuse my fault with better reasons than I can find to do it myself.

Lop. Say you so?—I'm very glad to hear that; then all's safe. [*Aside.*

Don Lor. 'Tis unexpected good fortune; but it could never proceed purely from his own temper; there must have been pains taken with him to bring him to this calm. I'm sure I owe much to the bounty of some friend or other; I wish I knew where my obligation lay, that I might acknowledge it as I ought.

Lop. [*Aside.*] Are you thereabouts, i'faith? Then sharp's the word; egad I'll own the thing, and receive his bounty for't.—[*Aloud.*] Why, sir—not that I pretend to make a merit o' the matter, for, alas! I am but your poor hireling, and there-

fore bound in duty to render you all the service I can;—but—'tis I have done't.

Don Lor. What hast thou done?

Lop. What no man else could have done—the job, sir; told him the secret, and then talked him into a liking on't.

Don Lor. 'Tis impossible; thou dost not tell me true.

Lop. Sir, I scorn to reap anything from another man's labours; but if this poor piece of service carries any merit with it, you now know where to reward it.

Don Lor. Thou art not serious?

Lop. I am, or may hunger be my messmate!

Don Lor. And may famine be mine, if I don't reward thee for't as thou deservest!—Dead!

[*Making a pass at him.*

Lop. Have a care there!—[*Leaping on one side.*] What do you mean, sir? I bar all surprise.

Don Lor. Traitor! is this the fruit of the trust I placed in thee, villain!

[*Making another thrust at him.*

Lop. Take heed, sir! you'll do one a mischief before y'are aware.

Don Lor. What recompense canst thou make me, wretch, for this piece of treachery? Thy sordid blood can't expiate the thousandth!—But I'll have it, however. [*Thrusts again.*

Lop. Look you there again! Pray, sir, be quiet; is the devil in you? 'Tis bad jesting with edged tools. Egad, that last push was within an inch o'me! I don't know what you make all this bustle about; but I'm sure I've done all for the best, and I believe 'twill prove for the best too at last, if you'll have but a little patience. But if gentlemen will be in their airs in a moment—— Why, what the deuse—I'm sure I have been as eloquent as Cicero in your behalf! and I don't doubt, to good purpose too, if you'll give things time to work. But nothing but foul language, and naked swords about the house!—Sa, sa! run you through, you dog! Why nobody can do business at this rate.

Don Lor. And suppose your project fail, and I'm ruined by't, sir!

Lop. Why, 'twill be time enough to kill me then, sir; won't it? What should you do it for now? Besides, I an't ready, I'm not prepared; I might be undone by't.

Don Lor. But what will Leonora say to her marriage being known, wretch?

Lop. Why maybe she'll draw—her sword too. —[*Showing his tongue.*] But all shall be well with you both, if you will but let me alone.

Don Lor. Peace! here's her father.

Lop. That's well: we shall see how things go presently.

Re-enter Don Alvarez.

Don Alv. [*Aside.*] The more I recover from the disorder this discourse has put me in, the more strange the whole adventure appears to me. Leonora maintains there is not a word of truth in what I have heard; that she knows nothing of marriage: and, indeed, she tells me this with such a naked air of sincerity, that, for my part, I believe her. What then must be their project? Some villanous intention, to be sure; though which way I yet am ignorant.—But here's the bridegroom; I'll accost him.—[*Aloud.*] I am told, sir, you take upon you to scandalise my daughter, and tell idle tales of what can never happen.

Lop. Now methinks, sir, if you treated your son-in-law with a little more civility, things might go just as well in the main.

Don Alv. What means this insolent fellow by my son-in-law! I suppose 'tis you, villain, are the author of this impudent story.

Lop. You seem angry, sir;—perhaps without cause.

Don Alv. Cause, traitor! Is a cause wanting, where a daughter's defamed, and a noble family scandalised?

Lop. There he is, let him answer you.

Don Alv. I should be glad he'd answer me: why, if he had any desires to my daughter, he did not make his approaches like a man of honour.

Lop. Yes; and so have had the doors bolted against him, like a house-breaker. [*Aside.*

Don Lor. Sir, to justify my proceeding, I have little to say; but to excuse it, I have much, if any allowance may be made to a passion which, in your youth, you have yourself been swayed by. I love your daughter to that excess—

Don Alv. You would undo her for a night's lodging.

Don Lor. Undo her, sir!

Don Alv. Yes, that's the word. You knew it was against her interest to marry you, therefore you endeavoured to win her to't in private; you knew her friends would make a better bargain for her, therefore you kept your designs from their knowledge, and yet you love her to that excess—

Don Lor. I'd readily lay down my life to serve her.

Don Alv. Could you readily lay down fifty thousand pistoles to serve her, your excessive love would come with better credentials: an offer of life is very proper for the attack of a counterscarp, but a thousand ducats will sooner carry a lady's heart. You are a young man, but will learn this when you are older.

Lop. But since things have succeeded better this once, sir, and that my master will prove a most incomparable good husband (for that he'll do, I'll answer for him), and that 'tis too late to recal what's already done, sir—

Don Alv. What's done, villain?

Lop. Sir, I mean—that since my master and my lady are married, and—

Don Alv. Thou liest! they are not married.

Lop. Sir, I say—that since they are married, and that they love each other so passing dearly—indeed, I fancy—that—

Don Alv. Why, this impudence is beyond all bearing! Sir, do you put your rascal upon this?

Don Lor. Sir, I am in a wood! I don't know what it is you mean.

Don Alv. And I am in a plain, sir, and think I may be understood. Do you pretend you are married to my daughter?

Don Lor. Sir, 'tis my happiness on one side, as it is my misfortune on another.

Don Alv. And you do think this idle project can succeed? You do believe your affirming you are married to her will induce both her and me to consent it shall be so?

Lop. Sir, I see you make my master almost out of his wits to hear you talk so: but I, who am but a stander-by now, as I was at the wedding, have

mine about me, and desire to know, whether you think this project can succeed? Do you believe your affirming they are not married, will induce both him and I to give up the lady? One short question to bring this matter to an issue,—why do you think they are not married?

Don Alv. Because she utterly renounces it.

Lop. And so she will her religion, if you attack it with that dreadful face. D'ye hear, sir? the poor lady is in love heartily, and I wish all poor ladies that are so, would dispose of themselves so well as she has done; but you scare her out of her senses. Bring her here into the room, speak gently to her, tell her you know the thing is done, that you have it from a man of honour,—me: that maybe you wish it had been otherwise, but are a Christian, and profess mercy, and therefore have resolved to pardon her. Say this, and I shall appear a man of reputation, and have satisfaction made me.

Don Alv. Or an impudent rogue, and have all your bones broke.

Lop. Content!

Don Alv. Agreed!—Leonora!—Who's there? call Leonora.

Lop. All will go rarely, sir; we shall have shot the gulf in a moment. [*Aside to* LORENZO.

Enter LEONORA.

Don Alv. Come hither, Leonora.

Lop. So, now we shall see.

Don Alv. I called you to answer for youself; here's a strong claim upon you; if there be any thing in the pretended title, conceal it no farther, it must be known at last, it may as well be so now. Nothing is so uneasy as uncertainty, I would therefore be gladly freed from it. If you have done what I am told you have, 'tis a great fault indeed; but as I fear 'twill carry much of its punishment along with it, I shall rather reduce my resentment into mourning your misfortune, than suffer it to add to your affliction; therefore speak the truth.

Lop. Well, this is fair play; now I speak, sir.—You see, fair lady, the goodness of a tender father, nothing need therefore hinder you from owning a most loving husband. We had like to have been all together by the ears about this business, and pails of blood were ready to run about the house: but thank Heaven, the sun shines out again, and one word from your sweet mouth makes fair weather for ever. My master has been forced to own your marriage, he begs you'll do so too.

Leo. What does this impudent rascal mean?

Lop. Ha!—madam!

Leo. [*To* DON LORENZO] Sir, I should be very glad to know what can have been the occasion of this wild report; sure you cannot be yourself a party in it!

Lop. He, he—

Don Lor. Forgive me, dear Leonora, I know you had strong reasons for the secret being longer kept; but 'tis not my fault, our marriage is disclosed.

Leo. Our marriage, sir!—

Don Lor. 'Tis known, my dear, though much against my will; but since it is so, 'twould be in vain for us to deny it longer.

Leo. Then, sir, I am your wife? I fell in love with you, and married you without my father's knowledge?

Don Lor. I dare not be so vain to think 'twas love; I humbly am content to owe the blessing to your generosity;
You saw the pains I suffer'd for your sake,
And in compassion eased 'em.

Leo. I did, sir!
Sure this exceeds all human impudence!

Lop. Truly, I think it does. She'd make an incomparable actress. [*Aside.*

Don Lor. I begin to be surprised, madam, at your carrying this thing so far; you see there's no occasion for it; and for the discovery, I have already told you 'twas not my fault.

Lop. My master's! no, 'twas I did it. Why, what a bustle's here! I knew things would go well, and so they do, if folks would let 'em. But if ladies will be in their merriments, when gentlemen are upon serious business, why what a deuse can one say to 'em!

Leo. I see this fellow is to be an evidence in your plot. Where you hope to drive, it is hard to guess; for if anything can exceed its impudence, it is its folly. A noble stratagem indeed to win a lady by! I could be diverted with it, but that I see a face of villany requires a rougher treatment: I could almost, methinks, forget my sex, and be my own avenger.

Don Lor. Madam, I am surprised beyond all—

Lop. Pray, sir, let me come to her; you are so surprised you'll make nothing on't: she wants a little snubbing.—Look you, madam, I have seen many a pleasant humour amongst ladies, but you outcut 'em all. Here's contradiction with a vengeance! You han't been married eight-and-forty hours, and you are slap—at your husband's beard already. Why, do you consider who he is?—who this gentleman is?—and what he can do—by law? Why, he can lock you up—knock you down—tie you neck and heels—

Don Lor. Forbear, you insolent villain, you! [*Offering to strike him.*

Leo. That—for what's past however. [*Giving him a box on the ear.*

Lop. I think—she gave me a box o' th' ear; ha!—[*Exit* LEONORA.] Sir, will you suffer your old servants to be used thus by new comers? It's a shame, a mere shame. Sir, will you take a poor dog's advice for once? She denies she's married to you: take her at her word; you have seen some of her humours,—let her go.

Don Alv. Well, gentlemen, thus far you see I have heard all with patience; have you content? or how much farther do you design to go with this business?

Lop. Why truly, sir, I think we are near at a stand.

Don Alv. 'Tis time, you villain you!

Lop. Why and I am a villain now, if every word I've spoke be not as true as—as the Gazette: and your daughter's no better than a—a—a whimsical young woman, for making disputes among gentlemen. And if everybody had their deserts, she'd have a good—I won't speak it out to inflame reckonings; but let her go, master.

Don Alv. Sir, I don't think it well to spend any more words with your impudent and villanous servant here.

Lop. Thank you, sir: but I'd let her go.

Don Alv. Nor have I more to say to you than this, that you must not think so daring an affront to my family can go long unresented. Farewell! [*Exit.*

Don Lor. Well, sir, what have you to say for yourself now?

Lop. Why, sir, I have only to say, that I am a very unfortunate—middle-aged man; and that I believe all the stars upon heaven and earth have been concerned in my destiny. Children now unborn will hereafter sing my downfal in mournful lines, and notes of doleful tune: I am at present troubled in mind, despair around me, signified in appearing gibbets, with a great bundle of dog-whips by way of preparation.

I therefore will go seek some mountain high,
If high enough some mountain may be found,
With distant valley, dreadfully profound,
And from the horrid cliff—look calmly all around.
Farewell!

Don Lor. No, sirrah: I'll see your wretched end myself. Die here, villain! [*Drawing his sword.*

Lop. I can't, sir, if anybody looks upon me.

Don Lor. Away, you trifling wretch! but think not to escape, for thou shalt have thy recompense. [*Exit.*

Lop. Why, what a mischievous jade is this, to make such an uproar in a family the first day of her marriage! Why, my master won't so much as get a honeymoon out of her! Egad, I'd let her go. If she be thus in her soft and tender youth, she'll be rare company at threescore. Well, he may do as he pleases; but were she my dear, I'd let her go —such a foot at her tail, I'd make the truth bounce out at her mouth like a pellet out of a pot-gun. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter CAMILLO *and* ISABELLA.

Isab. 'Tis an unlucky accident indeed!

Cam. Ah, Isabella, fate has now determined my undoing! This thing can ne'er end here; Leonora and Lorenzo must soon come to some explanation; the dispute is too monstrous to pass over without further inquiry, which must discover all, and what will be the consequence I tremble at. For whether Don Alvarez knows of the imposture, or whether he is deceived with the rest of the world, when once it breaks out, and that the consequence is the loss of that great wealth he now enjoys by it, what must become of me? All paternal affections then must cease, and regarding me as an unhappy instrument in the trouble which will then o'erload him, he will return me to my humble birth, and then I'm lost for ever. For what, alas! will the deceived Lorenzo say? A wife, with neither fortune, birth, nor beauty, instead of one most plenteously endowed with all. O Heavens! what a sea of misery I have before me!

Isab. Indeed you reason right, but these reflections are ill-timed; why did you not employ them sooner?

Cam. Because I loved.

Isab. And don't you do so now?

Cam. I do, and therefore 'tis I make these cruel just reflections.

Isab. So that love, I find, can do anything.

Cam. Indeed it can. Its powers are wondrous great, its pains no tongue can tell, its bliss no heart conceive, crowns cannot recompense its torments, heaven scarce supplies its joys. My stake is of this value. Oh, counsel me how I shall save it!

Isab. Alas! that counsel's much beyond my wisdom's force, I see no way to help you.

Cam. And yet 'tis sure there's one.

Isab. What?

Cam. Death.

Isab. There possibly may be another; I have a thought this moment—perhaps there's nothing in it; yet a small passage comes to my remembrance, that I regarded little when it happened—I'll go and search for one may be of service. But hold; I see Don Carlos. He'll but disturb us now, let us avoid him. [*Exeunt.*

Enter DON CARLOS *and* SANCHO.

Don Car. Repulsed again! this is not to be borne. What though this villain's story be a falsehood, was I to blame to hearken to it? This usage cannot be supported: how was it she treated thee?

San. Never was ambassador worse received. Madam, my master asks ten thousand pardons, and humbly begs one moment's interview:—Begone, you rascal you! Madam, what answer shall I give my master?—Tell him he's a villain. Indeed, fair lady, I think this is hasty treatment.—Here, my footmen! toss me this fellow out at the window; —and away she went to her devotions.

Don Car. Did you see Jacinta?

San. Yes; she saluted me with half-a-score rogues and rascals too. I think our destinies are much alike, sir: and, o' my conscience, a couple of scurvy jades we are hampered with.

Don Car. Ungrateful woman! to receive with such contempt so quick a return of a heart so justly alarmed.

San. Ha! ha! ha!

Don Car. What, no allowance to be made to the first transports of a lover's fury, when roused by so dreadful an appearance! As just as my suspicions were, have I long suffered 'em to arraign her?

San. No.

Don Car. Have I waited for oaths or imprecations to clear her?

San. No.

Don Car. Nay, even now is not the whole world still in suspense about her? whilst I alone conclude her innocent.

San. 'Tis very true.

Don Car. She might, methinks, through this profound respect,
Observe a flame another would have cherish'd;
She might support me against groundless fears,
And save me from a rival's tyranny;
She might release me from these cruel racks,
And would, no doubt, if she could love as I do.

San. Ha! ha! ha!

Don Car. But since she don't, what do I whining here?
Curse on the base humilities of love!

San. Right.

Don Car. Let children kiss the rod that flays 'em,
Let dogs lie down, and lick the shoe that spurns 'em.

San. Ay.

Don Car. I am a man by nature meant for power;
The sceptre's given us to wield, and we
Betray our trust whenever
We meanly lay it at a woman's feet.

San. True, we are men, boo!—Come, master, let us both be in a passion; here's my sceptre.—[*Showing a cudgel.*] Subject Jacinta, look about you. Sir, was you ever in Muscovy? the women there love the men dearly; why? because—[*shaking his stick*] there's your love-powder for you. Ah, sir, were we but wise and stout, what work should we make with them! But this humble love-making spoils 'em all. A rare way indeed to bring matters about with 'em! We are persuading 'em all day they are angels and goddesses, in order to use 'em at night like human creatures; we are like to succeed truly!

Don Car. For my part, I never yet could bear a slight from anything, nor will I now. There's but one way, however, to resent it from a woman; and that's to drive her bravely from your heart, and place a worthier in her vacant throne.

San. Now, with submission to my betters, I have another way, sir; I'll drive my tyrant from my heart, and place myself in her throne. Yes; I will be lord of my own tenement, and keep my household in order. Would you would do so too, master! For, look you, I have been servitor in a college at Salamanca, and read philosophy with the doctors; where I found that a woman, in all times, has been observed to be an animal hard to understand, and much inclined to mischief. Now, as an animal is always an animal, and a captain always a captain, so a woman is always a woman: whence it is that a certain Greek says, her head is like a bank of sand; or, as another, a solid rock; or, according to a third, a dark lantern. Pray, sir, observe, for this is close reasoning; and so as the head is the head of the body; and that the body without a head, is like a head without a tail; and that where there is neither head nor tail, 'tis a very strange body: so I say a woman is by comparison, do you see, (for nothing explains things like comparisons,) I say by comparison, as Aristotle has often said before me, one may compare her to the raging sea. For as the sea, when the wind rises, knits its brows like an angry bull, and that waves mount upon rocks, and rocks mount upon waves; that porpoises leap like trouts, and whales skip about like gudgeons; that ships roll like beer-barrels, and mariners pray like saints; just so, I say, a woman——A woman, I say, just so, when her reason is shipwrecked upon her passion, and the hulk of her understanding lies thumping against the rock of her fury; then it is, I say, that by certain immotions, which—um—cause, as one may suppose, a sort of convulsive—yes—hurricanious—um—like—in short, a woman is like the devil.

Don Car. Admirably reasoned indeed, Sancho!

San. Pretty well, I thank Heaven.—But here come the crocodiles to weep us into mercy.

Enter LEONORA *and* JACINTA.

Master, let us show ourselves men, and leave their briny tears to wash their dirty faces.

Don Car. It is not in the power of charms to move me.

San. Nor me, I hope; and yet I fear those eyes
Will look out sharp to snatch up such a prize.
[*Pointing to* JACINTA.

Jac. He's coming to us, madam, to beg pardon; but sure you'll never grant it him!

Leo. If I do, may Heaven never grant me mine.

Jac. That's brave.

Don Car. You look, madam, upon me as if you thought I came to trouble you with my usual importunities; I'll ease you of that pain, by telling you, my business now is calmly to assure you, but I assure it you with heaven and hell for seconds; for may the joys of one fly from me, whilst the pains of t'other overtake me, if all your charms displayed e'er shake my resolution; I'll never see you more.

San. Bon!

Leo. You are a man of that nice honour, sir, I know you'll keep your word: I expected this assurance from you, and came this way only to thank you for't.

Jac. Very well!

Don Car. You did, imperious dame, you did! How base is woman's pride! How wretched are the ingredients it is formed of! If you saw cause for just disdain, why did you not at first repulse me? Why lead a slave in chains, that could not grace your triumphs? If I am thus to be contemned, think on the favours you have done the wretch, and hide your face for ever.

San. Well argued.

Leo. I own you have hit the only fault the world can charge me with: the favours I have done to you I am indeed ashamed of; but, since women have their frailties, you'll allow me mine.

Don Car. 'Tis well, extremely well, madam. I'm happy, however, you at last speak frankly. I thank you for it; from my soul I thank you: but don't expect me grovelling at your feet again; don't, for if I do—

Leo. You will be treated as you deserve; trod upon.

Don Car. Give me patience!—But I don't want it; I am calm. Madam, farewell; be happy if you can; by Heavens I wish you so, but never spread your net for me again; for if you do—

Leo. You'll be running into it.

Don Car. Rather run headlong into fire and flames;
Rather be torn with pincers bit from bit;
Rather be broil'd like martyrs upon gridirons!—
But I am wrong; this sounds like passion, and Heaven can tell I am not angry. Madam, I think we have no farther business together; your most humble servant.

Leo. Farewell t'ye, sir.

Don Car. [*To* SANCHO.] Come along.—[*Goes to the scene and returns.*] Yet once more before I go (lest you should doubt my resolution) may I starve, perish, rot, be blasted, dead, damned, or any other thing that men or gods can think on, if on any occasion whatever, civil or military, pleasure or business, love or hate, or any other accident of life, I, from this moment, change one word or look with you. [*As he goes off,* SANCHO *claps him on the back.*

Leo. Content!—Come away, Jacinta.

Re-enter DON CARLOS.

Don Car. Yet one word, madam, if you please. I have a little thing here belongs to you, a foolish bauble I once was fond of.—[*Twitching her picture from his breast.*] Will you accept a trifle from your servant?

Leo. Willingly, sir. I have a bauble too I think you have some claim to; you'll wear it for my sake.

[*Breaks a bracelet from her arm, and gives it him.*

Don Car. Most thankfully. This too I should restore you, it once was yours.—[*Giving her a table-book.*] By your favour, madam—there is a line or two in it I think you did me once the honour to write with your own fair hand. Here it is. [*Reads.*

You love me, Carlos, and would know
The secret movements of my heart,
Whether I give you mine or no,
With yours, methinks, I'd never, never part.

Thus you have encouraged me, and thus you have deceived me.

San. Very true.

Leo. [*Pulling out a table-book.*] I have some faithful lines too; I think I can produce 'em. [*Reads.*

How long soe'er, to sigh in vain,
My destiny may prove,
My fate (in spite of your disdain)
Will let me glory in your chain,
And give me leave eternally to love.

There, sir, take your poetry again.—[*Throwing it at his feet.*] 'Tis not much the worse for my wearing; 'twill serve again upon a fresh occasion.

Jac. Well done!

Don Car. I believe I can return the present, madam, with—a pocketfull of your prose.—There!

[*Throwing a handful of letters at her feet.*

Leo. Jacinta, give me his letters.—There, sir, not to be behindhand with you.

[*Takes a handful of his letters out of a box, and throws them in his face.*

Jac. And there! and there! and there, sir!

[JACINTA *throws the rest at him.*

San. 'Cods my life, we want ammunition! but for a shift—there! and there! you saucy slut you!

[SANCHO *pulls a pack of dirty cards out of his pocket, and throws them at her; then they close; he pulls off her headclothes, and she his wig, and then part, she running to her mistress, he to his master.*

Jac. I think, madam, we have clearly the better on't.

Leo. For a proof, I resolve to keep the field.

Jac. Have a care he don't rally and beat you yet though: pray walk off.

Leo. Fear nothing.

San. How the armies stand and gaze at one another after the battle! What think you, sir, of showing yourself a great general, by making an honourable retreat?

Don Car. I scorn it!—O Leonora! Leonora! a heart like mine should not be treated thus!

Leo. Carlos! Carlos! I have not deserved this usage!

Don Car. Barbarous Leonora! but 'tis useless to reproach you; she that is capable of what you have done, is formed too cruel ever to repent of it. Go on then, tyrant; make your bliss complete; torment me still, for still, alas! I love enough to be tormented.

Leo. Ah Carlos! little do you know the tender movements of that thing you name; the heart where love presides, admits no thought against the honour of its ruler.

Don Car. 'Tis not to call that honour into doubt,
If, conscious of our own unworthiness,
We interpret every frown to our destruction.

Leo. When jealousy proceeds from such humble apprehensions, it shows itself with more respect than yours has done.

Don Car. And where a heart is guiltless, it easily forgives a greater crime.

Leo. Forgiveness is not now in our debate; if both have been in fault, 'tis fit that both should suffer for it; our separation will do justice on us.

Don Car. But since we are ourselves the judges of our crimes, what if we should inflict a gentler punishment?

Leo. 'Twould but encourage us to sin again.

Don Car. And if it should—

Leo. 'Twould give a fresh occasion for the pleasing exercise of mercy.

Don Car. Right; and so
We act the part of earth and heaven together,
Of men and gods, and taste of both their pleasures.

Leo. The banquet's too inviting to refuse it.

Don Car. Then let's fall on, and feed upon't for ever.

[*Carries her off, embracing her, and kissing her hand.*

Leo. Ah woman! foolish, foolish woman!

San. Very foolish indeed.

Jac. But don't expect I'll follow her example.

San. You would, Mopsy, if I'd let you.

Jac. I'd sooner tear my eyes out; ah—that she had a little of my spirit in her!

San. I believe I shall find thou hast a great deal of her flesh, my charmer; but 'twon't do; I am all rock, hard rock, very marble.

Jac. A very pumice stone, you rascal you, if one would try thee! But to prevent thy humilities, and show thee all submission, would be vain; to convince thee thou hast nothing but misery and despair before thee, here—take back thy paltry thimble, and be in my debt, for the shirts I have made thee with it.

San. Nay, if y'are at that sport, mistress, I believe I shall lose nothing by the balance of the presents. There, take thy tobacco-stopper, and stop thy—

Jac. Here—take thy satin pincushion, with thy curious half hundred of pins in't, thou madest such a vapouring about yesterday. Tell 'em carefully, there's not one wanting.

San. There's thy ivory-hafted knife again, whet it well; 'tis so blunt 'twill cut nothing but love.

Jac. And there's thy pretty pocket scissars thou hast honoured me with, they'll cut off a leg or an arm. Heaven bless 'em!

San. Here's the enchanted handkerchief you were pleased to endear with your precious blood, when the violence of your love at dinner t'other day made you cut your fingers.—There.

[*Blows his nose in it and gives it her.*

Jac. The rascal so provokes me, I won't even keep his paltry garters from him. D' you see these? You pitiful beggarly scoundrel you!—There, take 'em, there.

[*She takes her garters off, and flaps them about his face.*

San. I have but one thing more of thine.—[*Showing his cudgel.*] I own 'tis the top of all thy presents, and might be useful to me; but that

thou mayest have nothing to upbraid me with, e'en take it again with the rest of'em.

[*Lifting it up to strike her, she leaps about his neck.*

Jac. Ah cruel Sancho!—Now beat me, Sancho, do.

San. Rather, like Indian beggars, beat my precious self. [*Throws away his stick, and embraces her.*

Rather let infants' blood about the streets,
Rather let all the wine about the cellar.
Rather let—Oh Jacinta—thou hast o'ercome.
How foolish are the great resolves of man!
Resolves, which we neither would keep, nor can.
When those bright eyes in kindness please to shine,
Their goodness I must needs return with mine:
Bless my Jacinta in her Sancho's arms—

Jac. And I my Sancho with Jacinta's charms.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter LOPEZ.

Lop. As soon as it is night, says my master to me, though it cost me my life, I'll enter Leonora's lodgings; therefore make haste, Lopez, prepare everything necessary, three pair of pocket-pistols, two wide-mouthed blunderbusses, some six ells of sword-blade, and a couple of dark lanterns. When my master said this to me; Sir, said I to my master, (that is, I would have said it if I had not been in such a fright I could say nothing, however I'll say it to him now, and shall probably have a quiet hearing,) look you, sir, by dint of reason I intend to confound you. You are resolved, you say, to get into Leonora's lodgings though the devil stand in the doorway?—Yes, Lopez, that's my resolution.—Very well; and what do you intend to do when you are there?—Why, what an injured man should do; make her sensible of— Make her sensible of a pudding! don't you see she's a jade? She'll raise the house about your ears, arm the whole family, set the great dog at you.—Were there legions of devils to repulse me, in such a cause I could disperse them all.—Why then you have no occasion for help, sir, you may leave me at home to lay the cloth.—No; thou art my ancient friend, my fellow traveller, and to reward thy faithful services this night thou shalt partake my danger and my glory.—Sir, I have got glory enough under you already, to content any reasonable servant for his life.—Thy modesty makes me willing to double my bounty; this night may bring eternal honour to thee and thy family.—Eternal honour, sir, is too much in conscience for a serving-man; besides, ambition has been many a great soul's undoing.—I doubt thou art afraid, my Lopez; thou shalt be armed with back, with breast, and head-piece.—They will encumber me in my retreat.—Retreat, my hero! thou never shalt retreat.—Then by my troth I'll never go, sir.—But here he comes.

Enter DON LORENZO.

Don Lor. Will it never be night! sure 'tis the longest day the sun e'er travelled.

Lop. Would 'twere as long as those in Greenland, sir, that you might spin out your life t'other half year. I don't like these nightly projects; a man can't see what he does. We shall have some scurvy mistake or other happen; a brace of bullets blunder through your head in the dark perhaps, and spoil all your intrigue.

Don Lor. Away, you trembling wretch, away!

Lop. Nay, sir, what I say is purely for your safety; for as to myself—uds-death, I no more value the losing a quart of blood than I do drinking a quart of wine. Besides, my veins are too full, my physician advised me but yesterday to let go twenty ounces for my health. So you see, sir, there's nothing of that in the case.

Don Lor. Then let me hear no other objections; for till I see Leonora I must lie upon the rack. I cannot bear her resentment, and will pacify her this night, or not live to see to-morrow.

Lop. Well, sir, since you are so determined, I shan't be impertinent with any farther advice; but I think you have laid your design to—[*Coughs*] (I have got such a cold to-day!) to get in privately, have you not?

Don Lor. Yes; and have taken care to be introduced as far as her chamber-door with all secrecy.

Lop. [*Coughing.*] This unlucky cough! I had rather have had a fever at another time. Sir, I should be sorry to do you more harm than good upon this occasion: if this cough should come upon me in the midst of the action [*coughs*] and give the alarm to the family, I should not forgive myself as long as I lived.

Don Lor. I have greater ventures than that to take my chance for, and can't dispense with your attendance, sir.

Lop. This 'tis to be a good servant, and make one's self necessary!

Enter TOLEDO.

Tol. Sir,—I am glad I have found you. I am a man of honour, you know, and do always profess losing my life upon a handsome occasion. Sir, I come to offer you my service. I am informed from unquestionable hands that Don Carlos is enraged against you to a dangerous degree; and that old Alvarez has given positive directions to break the legs and arms of your servant Lopez.

Lop. Look you there now, I thought what 'twould come to! What do they meddle with me for? what have I to do in my master's amours? The old Don's got out of his senses, I think; have I married his daughter?

Don Lor. Fear nothing, we'll take care o' thee.—Sir, I thank you for the favour of your intelligence, 'tis nothing however but what I expected, and am provided for.

Tol. Sir, I would advise you to provide yourself with good friends, I desire the honour to keep your back hand myself.

Lop. 'Tis very kind indeed. Pray, sir, have you ne'er a servant with you could hold a racket for me too?

Tol. I have two friends fit to head two armies; and yet—a word in your ear, they shan't cost you above a ducat a piece.

Lop. Take 'em by all means, sir, you were never offered a better pennyworth in your life.

Tol. Ah, sir!—little Diego—you have heard of him; he'd have been worth a legion upon this occasion. You know, I suppose, how they have served him.—They have hanged him, but he made a noble execution; they clapped the rack and the priest to him at once, but could neither get a word of confession nor a groan of repentance; he died mighty well truly.

Don Lor. Such a man is indeed much to be regretted: as for the rest of your escort, captain, I thank you for 'em, but shall not use 'em.

Tol. I'm sorry for't, sir, because I think you go in very great danger; I'm much afraid your rival won't give you fair play.

Lop. If he does I'll be hanged! he's a damned passionate fellow, and cares not what mischief he does.

Don Lor. I shall give him a very good opportunity; for I'll have no other guards about me but you, sir. So come along.

Lop. Why, sir, this is the sin of presumption; setting heaven at defiance, making jack-pudding of a blunderbuss.

Don Lor. No more, but follow.—Hold! turn this way; I see Camillo there. I would avoid him, till I see what part he takes in this odd affair of his sister's. For I would not have the quarrel fixed with him, if it be possible to avoid it. [*Exit.*

Lop. Sir!—Captain Toledo! one word if you please, sir. I'm mighty sorry to see my master won't accept of your friendly offer. Look ye, I'm not very rich; but as far as the expense of a dollar went, if you'd be so kind to take a little care of me, it should be at your service.

Tol. Let me see;—a dollar you say? but suppose I'm wounded?

Lop. Why you shall be put to no extraordinary charge upon that: I have been prentice to a barber, and will be your surgeon myself.

Tol. 'Tis too cheap in conscience; but my land-estate is so ill paid this war time—

Lop. That a little industry may be commendable; so say no more, that matter's fixed. [*Exeunt.*

Enter CAMILLO.

Cam. How miserable a perplexity have I brought myself into! Yet why do I complain? since,
With all the dreadful torture I endure,
I can't repent of one wild step I've made.
O love! what tempests canst thou raise, what storms
Canst thou assuage!
To all thy cruelties I am resign'd. Long years
Through seas of torment I'm content to roll,
So thou wilt guide me to the happy port
Of my Lorenzo's arms,
And bless me there with one calm day at last.

Enter ISABELLA.

What news, dear Isabella? Methinks there's something cheerful in your looks may give a trembling lover hopes. If you have comfort for me, speak, for I indeed have need of it.

Isab. Were your wants yet still greater than they are, I bring a plentiful supply.

Cam. O Heavens! is't possible!

Isab. New mysteries are out, and if you can find charms to wean Lorenzo from your sister, no other obstacle is in your way to all you wish.

Cam. Kind messenger from Heaven, speak on.

Isab. Know then, that you are daughter to Alvarez.

Cam. How! daughter to Alvarez!

Isab. You are: the truth this moment's come to light; and till this moment he, although your father, was a stranger to it; nay, did not even know you were a woman. In short, the great estate, which has occasioned these uncommon accidents, was left but on condition of a son; great hopes of one there was, when you destroyed 'em, and to your parents came a most unwelcome guest. To repair the disappointment, you were exchanged for that young Camillo, who few months after died. Your father then was absent, but your mother quick in contrivance, bold in execution, during that infant's sickness, had resolved his death should not deprive her family of those advantages his life had given it; so ordered things with such dexterity, that once again there passed a change between you. Of this (for reasons yet unknown to me) she made a secret to her husband, and took such wise precautions, that till this hour 'twas so to all the world, except the person from whom I now have heard it.

Cam. This news indeed affords a view of no unhappy termination; yet there are difficulties still may be of fatal hindrance.

Isab. None, except that one I just now named to you; for to remove the rest, know I have already unfolded all both to Alvarez and Don Felix.

Cam. And how have they received it?

Isab. To your wishes both. As for Lorenzo, he is yet a stranger to all has passed, and the two old fathers desire he may some moments longer continue so. They have agreed to be a little merry with the heats he is in, and engage you in a family-quarrel with him.

Cam. I doubt, Isabella, I shall act that part but faintly.

Isab. No matter, you'll make amends for it in the scene of reconciliation.

Cam. Pray Heaven it be my lot to act it with him.

Isab. Here comes Don Felix to wish you joy.

Enter DON FELIX.

Don Fel. Come near, my daughter, and with extended arms of great affection let me receive thee.—[*Kisses her.*] Thou art a dainty wench, good faith thou art, and 'tis a mettled action thou hast done; if Lorenzo don't like thee the better for't, cods my life, he's a pitiful fellow, and I shan't believe the bonny old man had the getting of him.

Cam. I'm so encouraged by your forgiveness, sir, methinks I have some flattering hopes of his.

Don Fel. Of his! egad and he had best; I believe he'll meet with his match if he don't. What dost think of trying his courage a little, by way of a joke or so?

Isab. I was just telling her your design, sir.

Don Fel. Why I'm in a mighty witty way upon this whimsical occasion; but I see him coming. You must not appear yet; go your way in to the rest of the people there, and I'll inform him what a squabble he has worked himself into here.

[*Exeunt* CAMILLO *and* ISABELLA.

Re-enter DON LORENZO *and* LOPEZ.

Lop. Pray, sir, don't be so obstinate now, don't affront Heaven at this rate. I had a vision last night about this business on purpose to forewarn you; I dreamt of goose-eggs, a blunt knife, and the snuff of a candle; I'm sure there's mischief towards.

Don Lor. You cowardly rascal, hold your tongue.

Don Fel. Lorenzo, come hither, my boy, I was just going to send for thee. The honour of our ancient family lies in thy hands; there is a combat preparing, thou must fight, my son.

Lop. Look you there now, did not I tell you? Oh, dreams are wondrous things! I never knew that snuff of a candle fail yet.

Don Lor. Sir, I do not doubt but Carlos seeks my life, I hope he'll do it fairly.

Lop. Fairly, do you hear, fairly! give me leave to tell you, sir, folks are not fit to be trusted with lives that don't know how to look better after 'em. —Sir, you gave it him, I hope you'll make him take a little more care on't.

Don Fel. My care shall be to make him do as a man of honour ought to do.

Lop. What, will you let him fight then? let your own flesh and blood fight?

Don Fel. In a good cause, as this is.

Lop. *O monstrum horrendum!* Now I have that humanity about me, that if a man but talks to me of fighting, I shiver at the name on't.

Don Lor. What you do on this occasion, sir, is worthy of you: and had I been wanting to you, in my due regards before, this noble action would have stamped that impression, which a grateful son ought to have for so generous a father.

Lop. [*Aside.*] Very generous truly! gives him leave to be run through the guts, for his posterity to brag on a hundred years hence.

Don Lor. I think, sir, as things now stand, it won't be right for me to wait for Carlos's call; I'll if you please prevent him.

Lop. Ay, pray sir, do prevent him by all means; 'tis better made up, as you say, a thousand times.

Don Fel. Hold your tongue, you impertinent jack-a-napes! I will have him fight, and fight like a fury too; if he don't he'll be worsted, I can tell him that.—For know, son, your antagonist is not the person you name, it is an enemy of twice his force.

Lop. O dear! O dear! O dear! and will nobody keep 'em asunder?

Don Lor. Nobody shall keep us asunder, if once I know the man I have to deal with.

Don Fel. Thy man then is—Camillo.

Don Lor. Camillo!

Don Fel. 'Tis he; he'll suffer nobody to decide his quarrel but himself.

Lop. Then there are no seconds, sir?

Don Fel. None.

Lop. He's a brave man.

Don Fel. No, he says nobody's blood shall be spilled on this occasion, but theirs who have a title to it.

Lop. I believe he'll scarce have a lawsuit upon the claim.

Don Fel. In short, he accuses thee of a shameful falsehood, in pretending his sister Leonora was thy wife; and has upon it prevailed with his father, as thou hast done with thine, to let the debate be ended by the sword 'twixt him and thee.

Lop. And pray, sir, with submission, one short question if you please; what may the gentle Leonora say of this business?

Don Fel. She approves of the combat, and marries Carlos.

Lop. Why, God a-mercy!

Don Lor. Is it possible? sure she's a devil, not a woman.

Lop. Ecod, sir, a devil and a woman both, I think.

Don Fel. Well, thou sha't have satisfaction of some of 'em.—Here they all come.

Enter DON ALVAREZ, DON CARLOS, LEONORA, JACINTA, *and* SANCHO.

Don Alv. Well, Don Felix, have you prepared your son? for mine, he's ready to engage.

Don Lor. And so is his. My wrongs prepare me for a thousand combats. My hand has hitherto been held by the regard I've had to everything of kin to Leonora; but since the monstrous part she acts has driven her from my heart, I call for reparation from her family.

Don Alv. You'll have it, sir; Camillo will attend you instantly.

Lop. O lack! O lack! will nobody do a little something to prevent bloodshed?—[*To* LEONORA.] Why, madam, have you no pity, no bowels? Stand and see one of your husbands stotered before your face? 'Tis an arrant shame.

Leo. If widowhood be my fate, I must bear it as I can.

Lop. Why, did you ever hear the like?

Don Lor. Talk to her no more. Her monstrous impudence is no otherwise to be replied to than by a dagger in her brother's heart.

Leo. Yonder he's coming to receive it. But have a care, brave sir, he does not place it in another's.

Don Lor. It is not in his power. He has a rotten cause upon his sword, I'm sorry he is engaged in't; but since he is he must take his fate.—[*To* DON CARLOS.] For you, my bravo, expect me in your turn.

Don Car. You'll find Camillo, sir, will set your hand out.

Don Lor. A beardless boy! You might have matched me better, sir; but prudence is a virtue.

Don Fel. Nay, son, I would not have thee despise thy adversary neither; thou'lt find Camillo will put thee hardly to't.

Don Lor. I wish we were come to the trial. Why does he not appear?

Jac. Now do I hate to hear people brag thus. Sir, with my lady's leave, I'll hold a ducat he disarms you. [*They laugh.*

Don Lor. Why, what!—I think I'm sported with. Take heed, I warn you all; I am not to be trifled with.

Re-enter CAMILLO *and* ISABELLA.

Leo. You shan't, sir; here's one will be in earnest with you.

Don Lor. He's welcome: though I had rather have drawn my sword against another.—I'm sorry, Camillo, we should meet on such bad terms as these; yet more sorry your sister should be the wicked cause on't: but since nothing will serve her but the blood either of a husband or brother, she shall be glutted with't. Draw!

Lop. Ah Lard! ah Lard! ah Lard!

Don Lor. And yet, before I take this instrument of death into my fatal hand, hear me, Camillo; hear, Alvarez; all!
I imprecate the utmost powers of Heaven
To shower upon my head the deadliest of its wrath;
I ask that all hell's torments may unite
To round my soul with one eternal anguish,
If wicked Leonora ben't my wife.

All. O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!

Leo. Why then, may all those curses pass him by,
And wrap me in their everlasting pains,
If ever once I had a fleeting thought
Of making him my husband.

Lop. O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!

Leo. Nay more; to strike him dumb at once, and show what men with honest looks can practise, know he's married to another.

Don Alv. & Don Fel. How!

Leo. The truth of this is known to some here.

Jac. Nay, 'tis certainly so.

Isab. 'Tis to a friend of mine.

Don Car. I know the person.

Don Lor. 'Tis false! and thou art a villain for thy testimony.

Cam. Then let me speak; what they aver is true, and I myself was, in disguise, a witness of its doing.

Don Lor. Death and confusion! he a villain too! —Have at thy heart. [*He draws.*

Lop. Ah!—I can't bear the sight on't.

Cam. Put up that furious thing, there's no business for't.

Don Lor. There's business for a dagger, stripling; 'tis that should be thy recompense.

Cam. Why then to show thee naked to the world, and close thy mouth for ever—I am myself thy wife—

Don Lor. What does the dog mean?

Cam. To fall upon the earth and sue for mercy. [*Kneels and lets her periwig fall off.*

Don Lor. A woman!—

Lop. Ecod, and a pretty one too; you wags you!

Don Lor. I'm all amazement!—Rise, Camillo, (if I am still to call you by that name,) and let me hear the wonders you have for me.

Isab. That part her modesty will ask from me.
I'm to inform you then, that this disguise
Hides other mysteries besides a woman;
A large and fair estate was cover'd by't,
Which with the lady now will be resign'd you.
'Tis true, in justice it was yours before;
But 'tis the god of love has done you right.
To him you owe this strange discovery;
Through him you are to know the true Camillo's dead, and that this fair adventurer is daughter to Alvarez.

Don Lor. Incredible! But go on; let me hear more.

Don Fel. She'll tell thee the rest herself the next dark night she meets thee in the garden.

Don Lor. Ha!—Was it Camillo then, that I—

Isab. It was Camillo who there made you happy: and who has virtue, beauty, wit, and love—enough to make you so while life shall last you.

Don Lor. The proof she gives me of her love deserves a large acknowledgment indeed. Forgive me, therefore, Leonora, if what I owe this goodness and these charms, I with my utmost care, my life, my soul, endeavour to repay.

Cam. Is it then possible you can forgive me?

Don Lor. Indeed I can; few crimes have such a claim
To mercy. But join with me then, dear Camillo,
(For still I know you by no other name,)
Join with me to obtain your father's pardon.
Yours, Leonora, too, I must implore;
And yours, my friend, for now we may be such. [*To* CARLOS.
Of all I ask forgiveness: and since there is
So fair a cause of all my wild mistakes,
I hope I by her interest shall obtain it.

Don Alv. You have a claim to mine, Lorenzo, I wish I had so strong a one to yours; but if by future services, (though I lay down my life amongst 'em) I may blot out of your remembrance a fault (I cannot name), I then shall leave the world in peace.

Don Lor. In peace then, sir, enjoy it; for from this very hour, whate'er is past with me is gone for ever. Your daughter is too fair a mediatrix to be refused his pardon, to whom she owes the charms she pleads with for it.

From this good day, then let all discord cease;
Let those to come be harmony and peace;
Henceforth let all our different interests join,
Let fathers, lovers, friends, let all combine,
To make each other's days as bless'd as she will mine. [*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

(WRITTEN BY MR. MOTTEUX) SPOKEN BY ISABELLA.

I'M thinking, now good husbands are so few,
To get one like my friend, what I must do.
Camillo ventured hard; yet at the worst,
She stole love's honeymoon, and tried her lover first.
Many poor damsels, if they dared to tell,
Have done as much, but have not 'scaped so well.
'Tis well the scene's in Spain; thus in the dark,
I should be loath to trust a London spark.
Some accident might, for a private reason,
Silence a female, all this acting season.
Hard fate of woman! Any one would vex,
To think what odds you men have of our sex.
Restraint and customs share our inclination,
You men can try, and run o'er half the nation.
We dare not, even to avoid reproach,
When you're at White's, peep out of hackney-coach;
Nor with a friend at night, our fame regarding,
With glass drawn up, drive about Covent-garden.
If poor town-ladies steal in here, you rail,
Though like chaste nuns, their modest looks they veil;
With this decorum they can hardly gain
To be thought virtuous, even in Drury-lane,
Though this you'll not allow, yet sure you may
A plot to snap you, in an honest way.
In love-affairs, one scarce would spare a brother:
All cheat; and married folks may keep a pother,
But look as if they cheated one another.
You may pretend, our sex dissembles most,
But of your truth none have much cause to boast:
You promise bravely; but for all your storming,
We find you're not so valiant at performing.
Then sure Camillo's conduct you'll approve:
Would you not do as much for one you love?
Wedlock's but a blind bargain at the best,
You venture more, sometimes, to be not half so blest.
All, soon or late, that dangerous venture make,
And some of you may make a worse mistake.

THE COUNTRY HOUSE.

A Farce.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MONSIEUR BARNARD, *a ci-devant Lawyer turned Country-Gentleman.*
MONSIEUR GRIFFARD, *Brother to* MONSIEUR BARNARD.
ERASTUS, *in love with* MARIAMNE.
DORANT, *Son to* MONSIEUR BARNARD.
MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS.
BARON DE MESSY.
JANNO, *Cousin to* MONSIEUR BARNARD.
COLIN, *Servant to* MONSIEUR BARNARD.
CHARLY, *a little Boy, Cousin to* MARIAMNE.
Servant to ERASTUS.
MONSIEUR LA GARANTIERE, MONSIEUR LA ROSE, MONSIEUR TROFIGNAC, } *Friends to* DORANT.
A Soldier, Cook, *other* Servants, &c.

MADAME BARNARD, *Wife to* MONSIEUR BARNARD.
MARIAMNE, *Daughter to* MONSIEUR BARNARD *by a former marriage.*
MAWKIN, *Sister to* JANNO.
LISETTA, *Maid to* MARIAMNE.

SCENE,—NORMANDY IN FRANCE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Monsieur BARNARD'S *Country-House.*

Enter ERASTUS *and his* Servant, LISETTA *following.*

Lis. Once more I tell ye, sir, if you have any consideration in the world for her, you must begone this minute.

Erast. My dear Lisetta, let me but speak to her, let me but see her only.

Lis. You may do what you will; but not here, whilst you are in our house. I do believe she's as impatient to see you as you can be to see her; but—

Erast. But why won't you give us that satisfaction then?

Lis. Because I know the consequence; for when you once get together, the devil himself is not able to part ye; you will stay so long till you are surprised, and what will become of us then?

Serv. Why, then we shall be thrown out at the window, I suppose.

Lis. No, but I shall be turned out of doors.

Erast. How unfortunate am I! these doors are open to all the world, and only shut to me.

Lis. Because you come for a wife, and at our house we do not care for people that come for wives.

Serv. What would you have us come for, child?

Lis. Anything but wives; because they cannot be put off without portions.

Serv. Portions! No, no, never talk of portions; my master nor I neither don't want portions; and if he'd follow my advice, a regiment of fathers should not guard her.

Lis. What say you?

Serv. Why, if you'll contrive that my master may run away with your mistress, I don't much care, faith, if I run away with you.

Lis. Don't you so, rogue's face! But I hope to be better provided for.

Erast. Hold your tongues.—But where is Mariamne's brother? He is my bosom friend, and would be willing to serve me.

Lis. I told you before that he has been abroad a-hunting, and we han't seen him these three days; he seldom lies at home, to avoid his father's ill humour; so that it is not your mistress only that our old covetous cuff teases:—there's nobody in the family but feels the effects of his ill humour:—by his good will he would not suffer a creature to come within his doors, or eat at his table;—and if there be but a rabbit extraordinary for dinner, he thinks himself ruined for ever.

Erast. Then I find you pass your time comfortably in this family.

Lis. Not so bad as you imagine neither, perhaps; for, thank Heaven, we have a mistress that's as bountiful as he is stingy, one that will let him say what he will, and yet does what she will. But hark, here's somebody coming; it is certainly he.

Erast. Can't you hide us somewhere?

Lis. Here, here, get you in here as fast as you can.

Serv. Thrust me in too. [*Puts them into the closet.*

Enter MARIAMNE.

Lis. Oh, is it you?

Mar. So, Lisetta, where have you been? I've been looking for ye all over the house. Who are those people in the garden with my mother-in-law? I believe my father won't be very well pleased to see 'em there.

Lis. And here's somebody else not far off, that I believe your father won't be very well pleased with neither.—Come, sir, sir! [*Calls.*

Re-enter ERASTUS *and* Servant.

Mar. O heavens!

Lis. Come, lovers, I can allow you but a short bout on't this time; you must do your work with a jirk—one whisper, two sighs, and a kiss; make haste, I say, and I'll stand sentry for ye in the meantime. [*Exit.*

Mar. Do you know what you expose me to, Erastus? What do you mean?

Erast. To die, madam, since you receive me with so little pleasure.

Mar. Consider what would become of me, if my father should see you here.

Erast. What would you have me do?

Mar. Expect with patience some happy turn of affairs. My mother-in-law is kind and indulgent to a miracle; and her favour, if well managed, may turn to our advantage; and could I prevail upon myself to declare my passion to her, I don't doubt but she'd join in our interest.

Erast. Well, since we've nothing to fear from her, and your brother, you know, is my intimate friend, you may therefore conceal me somewhere about the house for a few days. I'll creep into any hole.

Serv. Ay, but who must have the care of bringing us victuals? [*Aside.*

Erast. Thrust us into the cellar, or up into the garret: I don't care where it is, so that it be but under the same roof with you.

Serv. But I don't say so, for that jade Lisetta will have the feeding of us, and I know what kind of diet she keeps.—I believe we shan't be like the fox in the fable, our bellies won't be so full but we shall be able to creep out at the same hole we got in at. [*Aside.*

Erast. Must I then begone? must I return to Paris?

Re-enter LISETTA.

Lis. Yes, that you must, and immediately too, for here's my master coming in upon ye.

Erast. What shall I do?

Lis. Begone this minute.

Mar. Stay in the village till you hear from me, none of our family know that you are in it.

Erast. Shall I see you sometimes?

Mar. I han't time to answer you now.

Lis. Make haste, I say; are you bewitched?

Erast. Will you write to me?

Mar. I will if I can.

Lis. Begone, I say; is the devil in you?—[*Thrusts* ERASTUS *and* Servant *out.*] Come this way, your father's just stepping in upon us. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Monsieur BARNARD *beating* COLIN.

Mon. Barn. Rogue! rascal! did not I command you? Did not I give you my orders, sirrah?

Col. Why, you gave me orders to let nobody in; and madam, her gives me orders to let everybody in—why, the devil himself can't please you boath, I think.

Mon. Barn. But, sirrah, you must obey my orders, not hers.

Col. Why, the gentlefolks asked for her, they did not ask for you—what do you make such a noise about?

Mon. Barn. For that reason, sirrah, you should not have let 'em in.

Col. Hold, sir, I'd rather see you angry than her, that's true; for when you're angry you have only the devil in ye, but when madam's in a passion she has the devil and his dam both in her belly.

Mon. Barn. You must mind what I say to you, sirrah, and obey my orders.

Col. Ay, ay, measter—but let's not quarrel with one another—you're always in such a plaguy humour.

Mon. Barn. What are these people that are just come?

Col. Nay, that know not I—but as fine volk they are as ever eye beheld, Heaven bless 'em!

Mon. Barn. Did you hear their names?

Col. Noa, noa, but in a coach they keam all besmeared with gould, with six breave horses, the like on 'em ne'er did I set eyes on.—'Twould do a man's heart good to look on sike fine beast, measter.

Mon. Barn. How many persons are there?

Col. Vour—two as fine men as ever woman bore, and two as dainty deames as a man would desire to lay his lips to.

Mon. Barn. And all this crew sets up at my house.

Col. Noa, noa, measter, the coachman is gone into the village to set up his coach at some inn, for I told him our coach-house was vull of vaggots, but he'll bring back the six horses, for I told him we had a rare good steable.

Mon. Barn. Did you so, rascal? did you so? [*Beats him.*

Col. Doant, doant, sir, it would do you good to see sike cattle, i'faith they look as if they had ne'er kept Lent.

Mon. Barn. Then they shall learn religion at my house.—Sirrah, do you take care they sup without oats to-night.—What will become of me! Since I have bought this damned country-house, I spend more in a summer than would maintain me seven year.

Col. Why, if you do spend money, han't you good things for it? Come they not to see you the whole country raund? Mind how you're beloved, measter.

Mon. Barn. Pox take such love!—

Re-enter LISETTA.

How now, what do you want?

Lis. Sir, there's some company in the garden with my mistress, who desire to see you.

Mon. Barn. The devil take 'em, what business have they here? But who are they?

Lis. Why, sir, there's the fat abbot that always sits so long at dinner, and drinks his two bottles by way of whet.

Mon. Barn. I wish his church was in his belly, that his guts might be half full before he came.—And who else?

Lis. Then there's the young marquis that won all my lady's money at cards.

Mon. Barn. Pox take him too!

Lis. Then there's the merry lady that's always in a good humour.

Mon. Barn. Very well.

Lis. Then there's she that threw down all my lady's china t'other day, and laughed at it for a jest.

Mon. Barn. Which I paid above fifty pounds for in earnest.—Very well, and pray how did madam receive all this fine company?—With a hearty welcome, and a curtsy with her bum down to the ground, ha?

Lis. No indeed, sir, she was very angry with 'em.

Mon. Barn. How, angry with 'em, say you?

Lis. Yes indeed, sir, for she expected they would have staid here a fortnight, but it seems things happen so unluckily that they can't stay here above ten days. [*Exit.*

Mon. Barn. Ten days! how! what! four persons with a coach and six, and a kennel of hungry hounds in liveries, to live upon me ten days!

Enter Soldier.

So, what do you want?

Sol. Sir, I come from your nephew, captain Hungry.

Mon. Barn. Well, what does he want?

Sol. He gives his service to you, sir, and sends you word that he'll come and dine with you to-morrow.

Mon. Barn. Dine with me! no, no, friend, tell him I don't dine at all to-morrow, it is my fast-day, my wife died on't.

Sol. And he has sent you here a pheasant and a couple of partridges.

Mon. Barn. How's that, a pheasant and partridges, say you!—Let's see—very fine birds, truly.—Let me consider—to-morrow is not my fast-day, I mistook; tell my nephew he shall be welcome.—[*To* COLIN.] And d'ye hear? do you take these fowl and hang them up in a cool place—and take this soldier in, and make him drink—make him drink, d'ye see—a cup,—ay, a cup of small beer—d'ye hear?

Col. Yes, sir.—Come along; our small beer is reare good. [*Exit.*

Sol. But, sir, he bade me tell you that he'll bring two or three of his brother officers along with him.

Mon. Barn. How's that! officers with him—here, come back—take the fowls again; I don't dine to-morrow, and so tell him.—[*Gives him the basket.*] Go, go! [*Thrusting him out.*

Sol. Sir, sir, that won't hinder them from coming, for they retired a little distance off the camp, and because your house is near 'em, sir, they resolve to come.

Mon. Barn. Go, begone, sirrah!—[*Thrusts him out.*] There's a rogue now, that sends me three lean carrion birds, and brings half-a-dozen varlets to eat them!

Enter Monsieur GRIFFARD.

Mon. Griff. Brother, what is the meaning of these doings? If you don't order your affairs better, you'll have your fowls taken out of your very yard, and carried away before your face.

Mon. Barn. Can I help it, brother? But what's the matter now?

Mon. Griff. There's a parcel of fellows have been hunting about your grounds all this morning, broke down your hedges, and are now coming into your house.—Don't you hear them?

Mon. Barn. No, no, I don't hear them: who are they?

Mon. Griff. Three or four rake-helly officers, with your nephew at the head of 'em.

Mon. Barn. O the rogue! he might well send me fowls.—But is it not a vexatious thing, that I must stand still and see myself plundered at this rate, and have a carrion of a wife who thinks I ought to thank all these rogues that come to devour me! But can't you advise me what's to be done in this case?

Mon. Griff. I wish I could, for it goes to my heart to see you thus treated by a crew of vermin, who think they do you a great deal of honour in ruining of you.

Mon. Barn. Can there be no way found to redress this?

Mon. Griff. If I were you, I'd leave this house quite, and go to town.

Mon. Barn. What, and leave my wife behind me? ay that would be mending the matter indeed!

Mon. Griff. Why don't you sell it then?

Mon. Barn. Because nobody will buy it; it has got as bad a name as if the plague were in't; it has been sold over and over, and every family that has lived in it has been ruined.

Mon. Griff. Then send away all your beds and furniture, except what is absolutely necessary for your own family; you'll save something by that, for then your guests can't stay with you all night, however.

Mon. Barn. I've tried that already, and it signified nothing:—for they all got drunk and lay in the barn, and next morning laughed it off for a frolic.

Mon. Griff. Then there is but one remedy left that I can think off.

Mon. Barn. What's that?

Mon. Griff. You must e'en do what's done when a town's on fire, blow up your house that the mischief may run no further.—But who is this gentleman?

Mon. Barn. I never saw him in my life before, but for all that, I'll hold fifty pound he comes to dine with me.

Enter the Marquis.

Marq. My dear M. Barnard, I'm your most humble servant.

Mon. Barn. I don't doubt it, sir.

Marq. What is the meaning of this, M. Barnard? You look as coldly upon me as if I were a stranger.

Mon. Barn. Why truly, sir, I'm very apt to do so by persons I never saw in my life before.

Marq. You must know, M. Barnard, I'm come on purpose to drink a bottle with you.

Mon. Barn. That may be, sir; but it happens that at this time I'm not at all dry.

Marq. I left the ladies at cards waiting for supper; for my part, I never play; so I came to see my dear M. Barnard; and I'll assure you, I undertook this journey only to have the honour of your acquaintance.

Mon. Barn. You might have spared yourself that trouble, sir.

Marq. Don't you know, M. Barnard, that this house of yours is a little paradise?

Mon. Barn. Then rot me, if it be, sir!

Marq. For my part, I think a pretty retreat in

the country is one of the greatest comforts in life; I suppose you never want good company, M. Barnard?

Mon. Barn. No, sir, I never want company; for you must know I love very much to be alone.

Marq. Good wine you must keep above all things, without good wine and good cheer I would not give a fig for the country.

Mon. Barn. Really, sir, my wine is the worst you ever drank in your life, and you'll find my cheer but very indifferent.

Marq. No matter, no matter, M. Barnard; I've heard much of your hospitality, there's a plentiful table in your looks—and your wife is certainly one of the best women in the world.

Mon. Barn. Rot me if she be, sir!

Re-enter COLIN.

Col. Sir, sir, yonder's the baron de Messy has lost his hawk in our garden; he says it is perched upon one of the trees; may we let him have'n again, sir?

Mon. Barn. Go tell him, that—

Col. Nay, you may tell him yourself, for here he comes.

Enter BARON DE MESSY.

Baron. Sir, I'm your most humble servant, and ask you a thousand pardons that I should live so long in your neighbourhood, and come upon such an occasion as this to pay you my first respects.

Mon. Barn. It is very well, sir; but I think people may be very good neighbours without visiting one another.

Baron. Pray how do you like our country?

Mon. Barn. Not at all, I am quite tired on't.

Marq. Is it not the baron! it is certainly he.

Baron. How; my dear marquis! let me embrace you.

Marq. My dear baron, let me kiss you.

[*They run and embrace.*

Baron. We have not seen one another since we were schoolfellows before.

Marq. The happiest rencontre!

Mon. Griff. These gentlemen seem to be very well acquainted.

Mon. Barn. Yes, but I know neither one nor t'other of them.

Marq. Baron, let me present to you one of the best-natured men in the world—M. Barnard here, the flower of hospitality!—I congratulate you upon having so good a neighbour.

Mon. Barn. Sir!

Baron. It is an advantage I am proud of.

Mon. Barn. Sir!

Marq. Come, gentlemen, you must be very intimate; let me have the honour of bringing you better acquainted.

Mon. Barn. Sir!

Baron. Dear Marquis, I shall take it as a favour if you'll do me that honour.

Barn. Sir!

Marq. With all my heart.—Come, baron, now you are here we can make up the most agreeable company in the world.—Faith you shall stay and pass a few days with us.

Mon. Barn. Methinks now, this son of a whore does the honours of my house to a miracle. [*Aside.*

Baron. I don't know what to say, but I should be very glad you'd excuse me.

Marq. Faith, I can't.

Baron. Dear marquis!

Marq. Egad, I won't.

Baron. Well, since it must be so—but here comes the lady of the family.

Enter MADAME BARNARD.

Marq. Madam, let me present you to the flower of France.

Baron. Madam, I shall think myself the happiest person in the world in your ladyship's acquaintance; and the little estate I have in this country I esteem more than all the rest, because it lies so near your ladyship.

Mad. Barn. Sir, your most humble servant.

Marq. Madam, the baron de Messy is the best-humoured man in the world. I've prevailed with him to give us his company a few days.

Mad. Barn. I'm sure you could not oblige M. Barnard or me more.

Mon. Barn. That's a damned lie, I'm sure.

[*Aside.*

Baron. I'm sorry, madam, I can't accept of the honour—for it falls out so unluckily, that I've some ladies at my house that I can't possibly leave.

Marq. No matter, no matter, baron; you have ladies at your house, we have ladies at our house—let's join companies.—Come, let's send for them immediately; the more the merrier.

Mon. Barn. An admirable expedient, truly!

Baron. Well, since it must be so, I'll go for them myself.

Marq. Make haste, dear baron, for we shall be impatient for your return.

Baron. Madam, your most humble servant.—But I won't take my leave of you—I shall be back again immediately.—Monsieur Barnard, I'm your most humble servant; since you will have it so, I'll return as soon as possible.

[*Exeunt* BARON DE MESSY *and* Marquis.

Mon. Barn. I have it so! 'sbud, sir, you may stay as long as you please; I'm in no haste for ye. Madam, you are the cause that I am not master of my own house.

Mad. Barn. Will you never learn to be reasonable, husband?

Re-enter the Marquis.

Marq. The baron is the best-humoured man in the world, only a little too ceremonious, that's all. —I love to be free and generous; since I came to Paris I've reformed half the court.

Mad. Barn. You are of the most agreeable humour in the world, marquis.

Marq. Always merry.—But what have you done with the ladies?

Mad. Barn. I left them at cards.

Marq. Well, I'll wait upon 'em. But, madam, let me desire you not to put yourself to any extraordinary expense upon our accounts.—You must consider we have more than one day to live together.

Mad. Barn. You are pleased to be merry, marquis.

Marq. Treat us without ceremony. Good wine and poultry you have of your own; wild-fowl and fish are brought to your door:—you need not send abroad for anything but a piece of butcher's meat, or so.—Let us have no extraordinaries. [*Exit.*

Mon. Barn. If I had the feeding of you, a thunderbolt should be your supper.

Mad. Barn. Husband, will you never change your humour? If you go on at this rate, it will be impossible to live with ye.

Mon. Barn. Very true; for in a little time I shall have nothing to live upon.

Mad. Barn. Do you know what a ridiculous figure you make?

Mon. Barn. You'll make a great deal worse, when you han't money enough to pay for the washing of your shifts.

Mad. Barn. It seems you married me only to dishonour me; how horrible this is!

Mon. Barn. I tell ye, you'll ruin me. Do you know how much money you spend in a year?

Mad. Barn. Not I truly, I don't understand arithmetic.

Mon. Barn. Arithmetic, O Lud! O Lud! Is it so hard to comprehend, that he who receives but sixpence and spends a shilling, must be ruined in the end?

Mad. Barn. I never troubled my head with accounts, nor never will; but if you did but know what ridiculous things the world says of ye—

Mon. Barn. Rot the world!—'Twill say worse of me when I am in a jail.

Mad. Barn. A very Christian-like saying, truly!

Mon. Barn. Don't tell me of Christian!—Adsbud, I'll turn Jew, and nobody shall eat at my table that is not circumcised.

Re-enter LISETTA.

Lis. Madam, there's the duchess of Twangdillo just fell down near our door, her coach was overturned.

Mad. Barn. I hope her grace has received no hurt?

Lis. No, madam, but her coach is broke.

Mon. Barn. Then there's a smith in town may mend it.

Lis. They say 'twill require two or three days to fit it up again.

Mad. Barn. I'm glad on't with all my heart, for then I shall enjoy the pleasure of her grace's good company.—I'll wait upon her.

Mon. Barn. Very fine doings this!

[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The same.*

Enter Monsieur BARNARD.

Mon. Barn. Heaven be now my comfort, for my house is hell:—[*Starts.*] Who's there, what do you want? who are you?

Enter Servant *with a portmanteau.*

Serv. Sir, here's your cousin Janno and cousin Mawkin come from Paris.

Mon. Barn. What a plague do they want?

Enter JANNO, *leading in* MAWKIN.

Jan. Come, sister, come along.—Oh, here's cousin Barnard.—Cousin Barnard, your servant.—Here's my sister Mawkin and I are come to see you.

Mawk. Ay, cousin, here's brother Janno and I are come from Paris to see you. Pray how does cousin Mariamne do?

Jan. My sister and I waunt well at Paris; so my father sent us here for two or three weeks to take a little country air.

Mon. Barn. You could not come to a worse place; for this is the worst air in the whole country.

Mawk. Nay, I'm sure, my father says it is the best.

Mon. Barn. Your father's a fool; I tell ye, 'tis the worst.

Jan. Nay, cousin, I fancy you're mistaken now; for I begin to find my stomach come to me already; in a fortnight's time you shall see how I'll lay about me.

Mon. Barn. I don't at all doubt it.

Mawk. Father would have sent sister Flip and little brother Humphrey, but the calash would not holds us all, and so they don't come till to-morrow with mother.

Jan. Come, sister, let's put up our things in our chamber; and after you have washed my face, and put me on a clean neckcloth, we'll go in and see how our cousins do.

Mawk. Ay, come along, we'll go and see cousin Mariamne.

Jan. Cousin, we shan't give you much trouble, one bed will serve us; for sister Mawkin and I always lie together.

Mawk. But, cousin; mother prays you that you'd order a little cock-broth for brother Janno and I, to be got ready as soon as may be.

Jan. Ay, *à propos*, cousin Barnard, that's true; my mother desires that we may have some cock-broth to drink two or three times a-day between meals, for my sister and I are sick folks.

Mawk. And some young chickens too, the doctor said, would bring us to our stomachs very soon.

Jan. You fib now, sister, it waunt young chickens, so it waunt, it was plump partridges sure, the doctor said so.

Mawk. Ay, so it was, brother.—Come, let's go in, and see our cousins.

Jan. Ay, come along, sister.—Cousin Barnard, don't forget the cock-broth.

[*Exeunt* JANNO *and* MAWKIN, Servant *following.*

Mon. Barn. What the devil does all this mean! Mother, and sister Flip, and little brother Humphrey, and chickens, and partridges, and cock-broth, and fire from hell to dress 'em all.

Enter COLIN.

Col. O measter! O measter!—you'll not chide to-day, as you are usen to do; no, marry will you not; see now what it is to be wiser than one's measter!

Mon. Barn. What would this fool have?

Col. Why, thanks, and money to-boot, an folk were grateful.

Mon. Barn. What's the matter?

Col. Why, the matter is, if you have good store of company in your house, you have good store of meat to put in their bellies.

Mon. Barn. How so? how so?

Col. Why, a large and steately stag, with a pair of horns on his head, Heaven bless you, your worship might be seen to wear 'em, comes towards our geat a puffing and blawing like a cow in hard labour.—Now, says I to myself, says I, if my measter refuse to let this fine youth come in, why, then, he's a fool d'ye see.—So I opens him the geat, pulls off my hat with both my honds, and said, You're welcome, kind sir, to our house.

Mon. Barn. Well, well!

Col. Well, well, ay, and so it is well, as you shall straightway find. — So in he trots, and makes directly towards our barn, and goes bounce, bounce, against the door, as boldly as if he had been measter on't:—he turns'en about and thawcks'n down in the stra, as who would say, Here will I lay me till to-morrow morning.—But he had no fool to deal with: for to the kitchen goes I, and takes me down a musket, and, with a breace of balls, I hits'n such a slap in the feace, that he ne'er spoke a word more to me.—Have I done well or no, measter?

Mon. Barn. Yes, you have done very well for once.

Col. But this was not all, for a parcel of dogs came yelping after their companion, as I suppose; so I goes to the back-yard door, and, as many as came by, shu! says I, and drove 'em into the gearden; so there they are as safe as in a pawnd—ha! ha!—But I can't but think what a power of pasties we shall have at our house, ha! ha! [*Exit.*

Mon. Barn. I see Providence takes some care of me: this could never have happened in a better time.

Enter Cook.

Cook. Sir, sir, in the name of wonder, what do you mean? is it by your orders that all those dogs were let into the garden?

Mon. Barn. How!

Cook. I believe there's forty or fifty dogs tearing up the lettuce and cabbage by the root; I believe before they have done, they'll rout up the whole garden.

Mon. Barn. This is that rogue's doings.

Cook. This was not all, sir, for three or four of 'em came into the kitchen, and tore half the meat off the spit that was for your worship's supper.

Mon. Barn. The very dogs plague me!

Cook. And then there's a crew of hungry footmen who devoured what the dogs left, so that there's not a bit left for your worship's supper; not a scrap, not one morsel, sir. [*Exit.*

Mon. Barn. Sure I shall hit on some way to get rid of this crew.

Re-enter Colin.

Col. Sir, sir, here's the devil to do without yonder! A parcel of fellows swear they'll have our venison, and 'sblead I swear they shall have none on't; so stand to your arms, measter.

Mon. Barn. Ay, you've done finely, rogue, rascal, have you not? [*Beating him.*

Col. 'Sblead, I say they shan't have our venison! I'll die before I'll part with it. [*Exit.*

Enter Monsieur Griffard.

Mon. Griff. Brother, there's some gentlemen within ask for you.

Mon. Barn. What gentlemen? who are they?

Mon. Griff. The gentlemen that have been hunting all this morning, they're now gone up to your wife's chamber.

Mon. Barn. The devil go with 'em!

Mon. Griff. There's but one way to get rid of this plague, and that is, as I told you before, to set your house on fire.

Mon. Barn. That's doing myself an injury, not them.

Mon. Griff. There's dogs, horses, masters, and servants, all intend to stay here till to-morrow morning, that they may be near the woods to hunt the earlier:—besides (I overheard them) they're in a kind of plot against you.

Mon. Barn. What did they say?

Mon. Griff. You'll be angry if I should tell ye.

Mon. Barn. Can I be more angry than I am?

Mon. Griff. They said, then, that it was the greatest pleasure in the world to ruin an old lawyer in the country, who had got an estate by ruining honest people in town.

Mon. Barn. There's rogues for ye!

Mon. Griff. I'm mistaken if they don't play you some trick or other.

Mon. Barn. Hold, let me consider.

Mon. Griff. What are you doing?

Mon. Barn. I'm conceiving, I shall bring forth presently.—Oh, I have it! it comes from hence, wit was its father, and invention its mother; if I had thought on't sooner, I should have been happy.

Mon. Griff. What is it?

Mon. Barn. Come, come along, I say; you must help me to put it in execution.

Enter Lisetta.

Lis. Sir, my mistress desires you to walk up; she is not able, by herself, to pay the civilities due to so much good company.

Mon. Barn. O the carrion! What, does she play her jests upon me too?—but, mum, he laughs best that laughs last.

Lis. What shall I tell her, sir, will you come?

Mon. Barn. Yes, yes, tell her I'll come, with a pox to her! [*Exit with* Monsieur Griffard.

Lis. Nay, I don't wonder he should be angry:—they do try his patience, that's the truth on't.

Enter Marianne.

What, madam, have you left your mother and the company?

Mar. So much tittle tattle makes my head ache; I don't wonder my father should not love the country, for besides the expense he's at, he never enjoys a minute's quiet.

Lis. But let's talk of your own affairs:—have you writ to your lover?

Mar. No, for I have not had time since I saw him.

Lis. Now you have time then, about it immediately, for he's a sort of a desperate spark, and a body does not know what he may do if he should not hear from you. Besides you promised him, and you must behave yourself like a woman of honour, and keep your word.

Mar. I'll about it this minute.

Enter Charly.

Char. Cousin, cousin, cousin, where are you going? Come back, I have something to say to you.

Lis. What does this troublesome boy want?

Char. What's that to you what I want? Per-

haps I have something to say to her that will make her laugh.—Why sure! what need you care?

Mar. Don't snub my cousin Charly.—Well, what is't?

Char. Who do you think I met as I was coming here, but that handsome gentleman I've seen at church ogle you like any devil?

Mar. Hush, softly, cousin.

Lis. Not a word of that for your life.

Char. Oh, I know, I should not speak on't before folks; you know I made signs to you above, that I wanted to speak to you in private, didn't I, cousin?

Mar. Yes, yes, I saw you.

Char. You see I can keep a secret.—I am no girl, mun.—I believe I could tell ye fifty, and fifty to that, of my sister Cicely.—Oh, she's the devil of a girl!—but she gives me money and sugar-plums—and those that are kind to me fare the better for it, you see, cousin.

Mar. I always said my cousin Charly was a good-natured boy.

Lis. Well, and did he know you?

Char. Yes, I think he did know me—for he took me in his arms, and did so hug me and kiss me!—Between you and I, cousin, I believe he is one of the best friends I have in the world.

Mar. Well, but what did he say to you?

Char. Why, he asked me where I was going; I told him I was coming to see you; You're a lying young rogue, says he, I'm sure you dare not go see your cousin:—for you must know my sister was with me, and it seems he took her for a crack, and I being a forward boy, he fancied I was going to make love to her under a hedge, ha! ha!

Mar. So!

Char. So he offered to lay me a louis-d'or that I was not coming to you; so, Done! says I—Done! says he,—and so 'twas a bet, you know.

Mar. Certainly.

Char. So my sister's honour being concerned, and having a mind to win his louis-d'or, d'ye see—I bid him follow me, that he might see whether I came in or no.—But he said he'd wait for me at the little garden gate that opens into the fields, and if I would come through the house and meet him there, he should know by that whether I had been in or no.

Mar. Very well.

Char. So I went there, opened the gate, and let him in—

Mar. What then?

Char. Why, then he paid me the louis-d'or, that's all.

Mar. Why, that was honestly done.

Char. And then he talked to me of you, and said you had the charmingest bubbies, and every time he named 'em, Ha! says he, as if he had been sipping hot tea.

Mar. But was this all?

Char. No, for he had a mind, you must know, to win his louis-d'or back again; so he laid me another that I dare not come back and tell you that he was there; so, cousin, I hope you won't let me lose, for if you don't go to him and tell him that I've won, he won't pay me.

Mar. What, would you have me go and speak to a man?

Char. Not for any harm, but to win your poor cousin a louis-d'or. I'm sure you will—for you're a modest young woman, and may go without danger.—Well, cousin, I'll swear you look very handsome to-day, and have the prettiest bubbies there; do let me feel 'em, I'll swear you must.

Mar. What does the young rogue mean? I swear I'll have you whipped.

[*Exeunt* CHARLY *and* MARIAMNE.

Re-enter COLIN.

Col. Ha! ha! ha! our old gentleman's a wag, i'faith, he'll be even with 'em for all this, ha! ha! ha!

Lis. What's the matter? what does the fool laugh at?

Col. We an't in our house now, Lisetta, we're in an inn: ha! ha!

Lis. How in an inn?

Col. Yes, in an inn; my measter has gotten an old rusty sword and hung it up at our geat, and writ underneath with a piece of charcoal with his own fair hand, *At the Sword Royal; Entertainment for Man and Horse*; ha! ha!—

Lis. What whim is this?

Col. Thou and I live at the Sword Royal, ha! ha!

Lis. I'll go tell my mistress of her father's extravagance. [*Exit.*

Re-enter Monsieur BARNARD *and* Monsieur GRIFFARD.

Mon. Barn. Ha! ha! yes I think this will do.—Sirrah, Colin, you may now let in all the world; the more the better.

Col. Yes, sir.—Odsflesh! we shall break all the inns in the country:—for we have a breave handsome landlady, and a curious young lass to her daughter.—Oh, here comes my young measter.—We'll make him chamberlain—ha! ha!

Enter DORANT.

Mon. Barn. What's the matter, son? How comes it that you are all alone? You used to do me the favour to bring some of your friends along with ye.

Dor. Sir, there are some of 'em coming; I only rid before to beg you to give 'em a favourable reception.

Mon. Barn. Ay, why not? It is both for your honour and mine; you shall be master.

Dor. Sir, we have now an opportunity of making all the gentlemen in the country our friends.

Mon. Barn. I'm glad on't with all my heart; pray how so?

Dor. There's an old quarrel to be made up between two families, and all the company are to meet at our house.

Mon. Barn. Ay, with all my heart; but pray what is the quarrel?

Dor. O, sir, a very ancient quarrel; it happened between their great grandfathers about a duck.

Mon. Barn. A quarrel of consequence truly!

Dor. And 'twill be a great honour to us if this should be accommodated at our house.

Mon. Barn. Without doubt.

Dor. Dear sir, you astonish me with this goodness; how shall I express this obligation? I was afraid, sir, you would not like it.

Mon. Barn. Why so?

Dor. I thought, sir, you did not care for the expense.

Mon. Barn. O Lord, I am the most altered man in the world from what I was, I'm quite another thing, mun! But how many are there of 'em?

Dor. Not above nine or ten of a side, sir.

Mon. Barn. Oh, we shall dispose of them easily enough.

Dor. Some of 'em will be here presently; the rest I don't expect till to-morrow morning.

Mon. Barn. I hope they're good companions, jolly fellows, that love to eat and drink well?

Dor. The merriest, best-natured creatures in the world, sir.

Mon. Barn. I'm very glad on't, for 'tis such men I want.—Come, brother, you and I will go and prepare for their reception.

[*Exit with* Monsieur GRIFFARD.

Dor. Bless me, what an alteration is here! How my father's temper is changed within these two or three days! Do you know the meaning of it?

Col. Why the meaning on't is, ha! ha!

Dor. Can you tell me the cause of this sudden change, I say?

Col. Why the cause on't is, ha! ha!—

Dor. What do you laugh at, sirrah? do you know?

Col. Ha!—Because the old gentleman's a droll, that's all.

Dor. Sirrah, if I take the cudgel—

Col. Nay, sir, don't be angry for a little harmless mirth.—But here are your friends.

Enter Messieurs LA GARANTIERE, LA ROSE, *and* TROFIGNAC.

Dor. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Pasty Hall.—See that these gentlemen's horses are taken care of. [*Exit* COLIN.

La Gar. A very fine dwelling this.

Dor. Yes, the house is tolerable.

La Rose. And a very fine lordship belongs to it.

Dor. The land is good.

Trof. This house ought to have been mine; for my grandfather sold it to his father, from whom your father purchased it.

Dor. Yes, the house has gone through a great many hands.

La Gar. A sign there has always been good housekeeping in it.

Dor. And I hope there ever will.

Re-enter Monsieur BARNARD *and* Monsieur GRIFFARD, *dressed like* Drawers.

Mon. Barn. Gentlemen, do you call? will you please to see a room, gentlemen?—Somebody take off the gentlemen's boots there.

Dor. Father! uncle! what is the meaning of this?

Mon. Barn. Here, show a room.—Or will you please to walk into the kitchen first, gentlemen, and see what you like for dinner.

La Gar. Make no preparation, sir; your own dinner is sufficient.

Mon. Barn. Very well, I understand ye. Let's see, how many are there of ye?—[*Counting them.*] One, two, three, four: well, gentlemen, 'tis but half-a-crown a-piece for yourselves, and sixpence a head for your servants; your dinner shall be ready in half an hour. Here, show the gentlemen into the Apollo.

La Rose. What, sir, does your father keep an inn?

Mon. Barn. The Sword Royal, at your service, sir.

Dor. But, father, let me speak to you; would you disgrace me?

Mon. Barn. My wine is very good, gentlemen, but, to be very plain with ye, it is dear.

Dor. Oh, I shall run distracted!

Mon. Barn. You seem not to like my house, gentlemen; you may try all the inns in the county, and not be better entertained; but I own my bills run high.

Dor. Gentlemen, let me beg the favour of ye.

La Gar. Ay, my young squire of the Sword Royal, you shall receive some favours from us!

Dor. Dear Monsieur La Garantière!

La Gar. Here, my horse there!

Dor. Monsieur La Rose!

La Rose. Damn ye, ye prig!

Dor. Monsieur Trofignac!

Trof. Go to the devil!

[*Exeunt* Messieurs LA GARANTIERE, LA ROSE, *and* TROFIGNAC.

Dor. Oh, I'm disgraced for ever!

Mon. Barn. Now, son, this will teach you how to live.

Dor. Your son! I deny the kindred; I'm the son of a whore, and I'll burn your house about your ears, you old rogue you! [*Exit.*

Mon. Barn. Ha! ha!—

Mon. Griff. The young gentleman's in a passion.

Mon. Barn. They're all gone for all that, and the Sword-Royal's the best general in Christendom.

Enter ERASTUS'S Servant *talking with* LISETTA.

Lis. What, that tall gentleman I saw in the garden with ye?

Serv. The same, he's my master's uncle, and ranger of the king's forests. He intends to leave my master all he has.

Mon. Barn. Don't I know this scoundrel? What, is his master here!—What do you do here, rascal?

Serv. I was asking which must be my master's chamber.

Mon. Barn. Where is your master?

Serv. Above stairs with your wife and daughter; and I want to know where he's to lie, that I may put up his things.

Mon. Barn. Do you so, rascal?

Serv. A very handsome inn this.—Here, drawer, fetch me a pint of wine.

Mon. Barn. Take that, rascal; do you banter us? [*Kicks him out.*

Enter Madame BARNARD.

Mad. Barn. What is the meaning of this, husband? Are not you ashamed to turn your house into an inn?—and is this a dress for my spouse, and a man of your character?

Mon. Barn. I'd rather wear this dress than be ruined.

Mad. Barn. You're nearer being so than you imagine; for there are some persons within who have it in their power to punish you for your ridiculous folly.

Enter ERASTUS, *leading in* MARIAMNE.

Mon. Barn. How, sir, what means this? who sent you here?

Erast. It was the luckiest star in your firmament that sent me here.

Mon. Barn. Then I doubt, at my birth, the planets were but in a scurvy disposition.

Erast. Killing one of the king's stags, that run hither for refuge, is enough to overturn a fortune much better established than yours.—However, sir, if you will consent to give me your daughter, for her sake I will bear you harmless.

Mon. Barn. No, sir; no man shall have my daughter, that won't take my house too.

Erast. Sir, I will take your house; pay you the full value of it, and you shall remain as much master of it as ever.

Mon. Barn. No, sir, that won't do neither; you must be master yourself, and from this minute begin to do the honours of it in your own person.

Erast. Sir, I readily consent.

Mon. Barn. Upon that condition, and in order to get rid of my house, here, take my daughter.—And now, sir, if you think you've a hard bargain, I don't care if I toss you in my wife, to make you amends.

Well, then since all things thus are fairly sped,
My son in anger, and my daughter wed;
My house disposed of, the sole cause of strife,
I now may hope to lead a happy life,
If I can part with my engaging wife.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

A JOURNEY TO LONDON.

A Comedy.

[UNFINISHED.]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SIR FRANCIS HEADPIECE, *a Country Gentleman.*
LORD LOVERULE.
SIR CHARLES.
UNCLE RICHARD, *Uncle to* SIR FRANCIS HEADPIECE.
SQUIRE HUMPHRY, *Son to* SIR FRANCIS HEADPIECE.
COLONEL COURTLY.
CAPTAIN TOUPEE.
JOHN MOODY, GEORGE, TOM, *Servants to* SIR FRANCIS HEADPIECE.
JAMES, *Servant to* UNCLE RICHARD.
MONEYBAG, *Steward to* LORD LOVERULE.
SHORTYARD, *a Mercer.*

LADY HEADPIECE, *Wife to* SIR FRANCIS HEADPIECE.
MISS BETTY, *her Daughter.*
LADY ARABELLA, *Wife to* LORD LOVERULE.
CLARINDA, *a young unmarried Lady.*
MRS. MOTHERLY, *one that lets Lodgings.*
MARTILLA, *her Niece.*
MRS. HANDY, *Maid to* LADY HEADPIECE.
DOLL TRIPE, *Cookmaid to her Ladyship.*
DEBORAH, *Maid to* MRS. MOTHERLY.
TRUSTY, *Maid to* LADY ARABELLA.

SCENE,—LONDON.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* UNCLE RICHARD'S *House.*

Enter UNCLE RICHARD.

Unc. Rich. What prudent cares does this deep foreseeing nation take for the support of its worshipful families! In order to which, and that they may not fail to be always significant and useful in their country, it is a settled foundation-point that every child that is born shall be a beggar, except one; and that he—shall be a fool. My grandfather was bred a fool, as the country report; my father was a fool, as my mother used to say; my brother was a fool, to my own knowledge, though a great justice of the peace; and he has left a son that will make his son a fool, or I am mistaken. The lad is now fourteen years old, and but just out of his Psalter. As to his honoured father, my much-esteemed nephew—here I have him.—[*Takes out a letter.*] In this profound epistle (which I have just now received) there is the top and bottom of him. Forty years and two is the age of him; in which it is computed, by his butler, his own person has drank two-and-thirty tun of ale. The rest of his time has been employed in persecuting all the poor four-legged creatures round that would but run away fast enough from him, to give him the high-mettled pleasure of running after them. In this noble employ he has broke his right arm, his left leg, and both his collar-bones. Once he broke his neck, but that did him no harm; a nimble hedge-leaper, a brother of the stirrup, that was by, whipped off his horse and mended it. His estate being left him with two jointures and three weighty mortgages upon it, he, to make all easy, and pay his brother's and sister's portions, married a profuse young housewife for love, with never a penny of money. Having done all this, like his brave ancestors, for the support of the family, he now finds children and interest-money make such a bawling about his ears, that he has taken the friendly advice of his neighbour, the good lord Courtlove, to run his estate two thousand pounds more in debt, that he may retrieve his affairs by being a parliament-man, and bringing his wife to London to play off a hundred pounds at dice with ladies of quality before breakfast. But let me read this wiseacre's letter once over again.—[*Reads.*] *Most honoured uncle, I do not doubt but you have much rejoiced at my success in my election. It has cost me some money, I own; but what of all that! I am a parliament-man, and that will set all to rights. I have lived in the country all my days, 'tis true; but what then! I have made speeches at the sessions, and in the vestry too, and can elsewhere, perhaps, as well as some others that do; and I have a noble friend hard by, who has let me into some small knowledge of what's what at West-*

minister. And so, that I may be always at hand to serve my country, I have consulted with my wife about taking a house at London, and bringing her and my family up to town; which, her opinion is, will be the rightest thing in the world.—My wife's opinion about bringing her to London!—I'll read no more of thee—beast!

[*Strikes the letter down with his stick.*

Enter JAMES *hastily.*

James. Sir, sir! do you hear the news? They are all a-coming.

Unc. Rich. Ay, sirrah, I hear it, with a pox to it!

James. Sir, here's John Moody arrived already; he's stumping about the streets in his dirty boots, and asking every man he meets, if they can tell where he may have a good lodging for a parliament-man, till he can hire such a house as becomes him. He tells them his lady and all the family are coming too; and that they are so nobly attended they care not a fig for anybody. Sir, they have added two cart-horses to the four old geldings, because my lady will have it said she came to town in her coach-and-six; and—ha! ha!—heavy George the ploughman rides postilion!

Unc. Rich. Very well; the journey begins as it should do.—James!

James. Sir!

Unc. Rich. Dost know whether they bring all the children with them?

James. Only Squire Humphry and Miss Betty, sir; the other six are put to board at half-a-crown a week a head, with Joan Growse at Smoke-dunghill-farm.

Unc. Rich. The Lord have mercy upon all good folks! what work will these people make! Dost know when they'll be here?

James. John says, sir, they'd have been here last night, but that the old wheezy-belly horse tired, and the two fore-wheels came crash down at once in Waggonrut-lane. Sir, they were cruelly loaden, as I understand; my lady herself, he says, laid on four mail-trunks, besides the great deal-box, which fat Tom sate upon behind.

Unc. Rich. So!

James. Then within the coach there was Sir Francis, my lady, the great fat lapdog, Squire Humphry, Miss Betty, my lady's maid, Mrs. Handy, and Doll Tripe the cook; but she puked with sitting backward, so they mounted her into the coach-box.

Unc. Rich. Very well.

James. Then, sir, for fear of a famine before they should get to the baiting-place, there was such baskets of plum-cake, Dutch-gingerbread, Cheshire-cheese, Naples biscuits, maccaroons, neats'-tongues, and cold boiled beef;—and in case of sickness, such bottles of usquebaugh, black-cherry brandy, cinnamon-water, sack, tent, and strong-beer, as made the old coach crack again.

Unc. Rich. Well said!

James. And for defence of this good cheer and my lady's little pearl necklace, there was the family basket-hilt sword, the great Turkish cimiter, the old blunderbuss, a good bag of bullets, and a great horn of gunpowder.

Unc. Rich. Admirable!

James. Then for bandboxes, they were so be-piled up—to sir Francis's nose, that he could only peep out at a chance hole with one eye, as if he were viewing the country through a perspective-glass.—But, sir, if you please, I'll go look after John Moody a little, for fear of accidents; for he never was in London before, you know, but one week, and then he was kidnapped into a house of ill repute, where he exchanged all his money and clothes for a——um! So I'll go look after him, sir. [*Exit.*

Unc. Rich. Nay, I don't doubt but this wise expedition will be attended with more adventures than one. This noble head and supporter of his family will, as an honest country gentleman, get credit enough amongst the tradesmen, to run so far in debt in one session, as will make him just fit for a jail when he's dropped at the next election. He will make speeches in the house, to show the government of what importance he can be to them, by which they will see he can be of no importance at all; and he will find, in time, that he stands valued at (if he votes right) being sometimes—invited to dinner! Then his wife (who has ten times more of a jade about her than she yet knows of) will so improve in this rich soil, she will, in one month, learn every vice the finest lady in the town can teach her. She will be extremely courteous to the fops who make love to her in jest, and she will be extremely grateful to those who do it in earnest. She will visit all ladies that will let her into their houses, and she will run in debt to all the shop-keepers that will let her into their books. In short, before her husband has got five pound by a speech at Westminster, she will have lost five hundred at cards and dice in the parish of St. James's.—Wife and family to London with a pox! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Mrs. MOTHERLY'S *House.*

Enter JAMES, *and* JOHN MOODY.

James. Dear John Moody, I am so glad to see you in London once more.

John. And I you, dear Mr. James. Give me a kiss.—Why that's friendly.

James. I wish they had been so, John, that you met with when you were here before.

John. Ah—murrain upon all rogues and whores! I say. But I am grown so cunning now, the deel himself can't handle me. I have made a notable bargain for these lodgings here, we are to pay but five pounds a-week, and have all the house to ourselves.

James. Where are the people that belong to it to be then?

John. Oh! there's only the gentlewoman, her two maids, and a cousin, a very pretty, civil young woman truly, and the maids are the merriest grigs—

James. Have a care, John.

John. Oh, fear nothing; we did so play together last night.

James. Hush! here comes my master.

Enter UNCLE RICHARD.

Unc. Rich. What! John has taken these lodgings, has he?

James. Yes, sir, he has taken 'em. [*Exit.*

Unc. Rich. O John! how dost do, honest John? I am glad to see thee with all my heart.

John. I humbly thank your worship. I'm staut still, and a faithful awd servant to th' family. Heaven prosper aw that belong to't.

Unc. Rich. What, they are all upon the road?

John. As mony as the awd coach would hauld, sir: the Lord send 'em well to tawn.

Unc. Rich. And well out on't again, John, ha!

John. Ah, sir! you are a wise man, so am I: home's home, I say. I wish we get any good here. I's sure we ha' got little upo' the road. Some mischief or other aw the day long. Slap! goes one thing, crack! goes another; my lady cries out for driving fast; the awd cattle are for going slow; Roger whips, they stand still and kick; nothing but a sort of a contradiction aw the journey long. My lady would gladly have been here last night, sir, though there were no lodgings got; but her ladyship said, she did naw care for that, she'd lie in the inn where the horses stood, as long as it was in London.

Unc. Rich. These ladies, these ladies, John!—

John. Ah, sir, I have seen a little of 'em, though not so much as my betters. Your worship is naw married yet?

Unc. Rich. No, John, no; I am an old bachelor still.

John. Heavens bless you, and preserve you, sir.

Unc. Rich. I think you have lost your good woman, John?

John. No, sir, that have I not; Bridget sticks to me still, sir. She was for coming to London too, but, no, says I, there may be mischief enough done without you.

Unc. Rich. Why that was bravely spoken, John, and like a man.

John. Sir, were my measter but hafe the mon that I am, gadswookers—though he'll speak stautly too sometimes, but then he canno hawd it; no, he canno hawd it.

Enter DEBORAH.

Deb. Mr. Moody, Mr. Moody, here's the coach come.

John. Already! no sure.

Deb. Yes, yes, it's at the door, they are getting out; my mistress is run to receive 'em.

John. And so will I, as in duty bound.
[*Exit with* DEBORAH.

Unc. Rich. And I will stay here, not being in duty bound to do the honours of this house.

Enter SIR FRANCIS HEADPIECE, LADY HEADPIECE, 'SQUIRE HUMPHRY, MISS BETTY, MRS. HANDY, JOHN MOODY, *and* MRS. MOTHERLY.

Lady Head. Do you hear, Moody, let all the things be first laid down here, and then carried where they'll be used.

John. They shall, an't please your ladyship.

Lady Head. What, my Uncle Richard here to receive us! This is kind indeed: sir, I am extremely glad to see you.

Unc. Rich. [*Salutes her.*] Niece, your servant. —[*Aside.*] I am extremely sorry to see you in the worst place I know in the world for a good woman to grow better in.—[*Aloud.*] Nephew, I am your servant too; but I don't know how to bid you welcome.

Sir Fran. I am sorry for that, sir.

Unc. Rich. Nay, 'tis for your own sake: I'm not concerned.

Sir Fran. I hope, uncle, I shall give you such weighty reasons for what I have done, as shall convince you I am a prudent man.

Unc. Rich. That wilt thou never convince me of, whilst thou shalt live. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Here, Humphry, come up to your uncle.—Sir, this is your godson.

Squire Hum. Honoured uncle and godfather, I crave leave to ask your blessing. [*Kneels.*

Unc. Rich. [*Aside.*] Thou art a numskull I see already.—[*Puts his hand on his head.*] There, thou hast it. And if it will do thee any good, may it be to make thee, at least, as wise a man as thy father.

Lady Head. Miss Betty, don't you see your Uncle?

Unc. Rich. And for thee, my dear, mayst thou be, at least, as good a woman as thy mother.

Miss Bet. I wish I may ever be so handsome, sir.

Unc. Rich. Ha! Miss Pert! now that's a thought that seems to have been hatched in the girl on this side Highgate. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Her tongue is a little nimble, sir.

Lady Head. That's only from her country education, sir Francis, she has been kept there too long; I therefore brought her to London, sir, to learn more reserve and modesty.

Unc. Rich. Oh, the best place in the world for it! Every woman she meets will teach her something of it. There's the good gentlewoman of the house looks like a knowing person, even she perhaps will be so good to read her a lesson, now and then, upon that subject.—[*Aside.*] An arrant bawd, or I have no skill in physiognomy!

Mrs. Moth. Alas, sir, miss won't stand long in need of my poor instructions; if she does, they'll be always at her service.

Lady Head. Very obliging indeed, Mrs. Motherly.

Sir Fran. Very kind and civil truly; I believe we are got into a mighty good house here.

Unc. Rich. [*Aside.*] For good business very probable.—[*Aloud.*] Well, niece, your servant for to-night; you have a great deal of affairs upon your hands here, so I won't hinder you.

Lady Head. I believe, sir, I shan't have much less every day, while I stay in this town, of one sort or other.

Unc. Rich. Why, 'tis a town of much action indeed.

Miss Bet. And my mother did not come to it to be idle, sir.

Unc. Rich. Nor you neither, I dare say, young mistress.

Miss Bet. I hope not, sir.

Unc. Rich. Um! miss Mettle.—[*Going*, SIR FRANCIS *following him.*] Where are you going, nephew?

Sir Fran. Only to attend you to the door, sir.

Unc. Rich. Phu! no ceremony with me; you'll find I shall use none with you or your family.

Sir Fran. I must do as you command me, sir.
[*Exit* UNCLE RICHARD.

Miss Bet. This uncle Richard, papa, seems but a crusty sort of an old fellow.

Sir Fran. He is a little odd, child; but you must be very civil to him, for he has a great deal of money, and nobody knows who he may give it to.

Lady Head. Phu, a fig for his money! you have so many projects of late about money, since you are a parliament-man, we must make ourselves

slaves to his testy humours, seven years perhaps, in hopes to be his heirs; and then he'll be just old enough to marry his maid.—But pray let us take care of our things here: are they all brought in yet?

Mrs. Hand. Almost, my lady; there are only some of the bandboxes behind, and a few odd things.

Lady Head. Let 'em be fetched in presently.

Mrs. Hand. They are here.—Come, bring the things in.

Enter SERVANT.

Is there all yet?

Serv. All but the great basket of apples, and the goose-pye.

Enter DOLL TRIPE.

Doll. Ah, my lady! we're aw undone; the goose-pye's gwon.

All. Gone?

Sir Fran. The goose-pye gone? how?

Doll. Why, sir, I had got it fast under my arm to bring it in, but being almost dark, up comes two of these thin starved London rogues, one gives me a great kick o' the—here; [*Laying her hand upon her backside.*] while t'other hungry varlet twitched the dear pye out of my hands, and away they run dawn street like two greyhounds. I cried out fire! but heavy George and fat Tom are after 'em with a vengeance; they'll sauce their jackets for 'em, I'll warrant 'em.

Enter GEORGE *with a bloody face, and* TOM.

So, have you catched 'em?

George. Catched 'em! the gallows catch 'em for me! I had naw run hafe the length of our bearn, before somewhat fetched me such a wherry across the shins, that dawn came I flop o' my feace all along in the channel, and thought I should ne'er ha' gotten up again; but Tom has skaward after them, and cried murder as he'd been stuck.

Tom. Yes, and straight upo' that, swap comes somewhat across my forehead, with such a force, that dawn came I like an ox.

Squire Hum. So, the poor pye's quite gone then!

Tom. Gone, young measter! yeaten I believe by this time. These I suppose are what they call sharpers in this country.

Squire Hum. It was a rare good pye.

Doll. As e'er these hands put pepper to.

Lady Head. Pray Mrs. Motherly, do they make a practice of these things often here?

Mrs. Moth. Madam, they'll twitch a rump of beef out of a boiling copper; and for a silver tankard, they make no more conscience of that, than if it were a Tunbridge sugar-box.

Sir Fran. I wish the coach and horses, George, were safe got to the inn. Do you and Roger take special care that nobody runs away with them, as you go thither.

George. I believe, sir, our cattle woant yeasily be run away with to-night; but weest take best care we con of them, poor sauls! [*Exit.*

Sir Fran. Do so, pray now.

Squire Hum. Feather, I had rather they had run away with heavy George than the goose-pye, a slice of it before supper to night would have been pure.

Lady Head. This boy is always thinking of his belly.

Sir Fran. But, my dear, you may allow him to be a little hungry after a journey.

Lady Head. Pray, good sir Francis, he has been constantly eating in the coach, and out of the coach, above seven hours this day. I wish my poor girl could eat a quarter as much.

Miss Bet. Mama, I could eat a good deal more than I do, but then I should grow fat mayhap, like him, and spoil my shape.

Lady Head. Mrs. Motherly, will you be so kind to tell them where they shall carry the things?

Mrs. Moth. Madam, I'll do the best I can: I doubt our closets will scarce hold 'em all, but we have garrets and cellars, which, with the help of hiring a store-room, I hope may do.—[*To* TOM.] Sir, will you be so good to help my maids a little in carrying away the things?

Tom. With all my heart, forsooth, if I con but see my way; but these whoresons have awmost knocked my eyen awt. [*They carry off the things.*

Mrs. Moth. Will your ladyship please to refresh yourself with a dish of tea, after your fatigue? I think I have pretty good.

Lady Head. If you please, Mrs. Motherly. [*Exit* MRS. MOTHERLY.

Squire Hum. Would not a good tankard of strong beer, nutmeg, and sugar, do better, feather, with a toast and some cheese?

Sir Fran. I think it would, son.—Here, John Moody, get us a tankard of good hearty stuff presently.

John. Sir, here's Norfolk-nog to be had at next door.

Squire Hum. That's best of all, feather; but make haste with it, John. [*Exit* JOHN MOODY.

Lady Head. Well, I wonder, Sir Francis, you will encourage that lad to swill his guts thus with such beastly, lubberly liquor: if it were burgundy, or champagne, something might be said for't; they'd perhaps give him some wit and spirit; but such heavy, muddy stuff as this will make him quite stupid.

Sir Fran. Why you know, my dear, I have drank good ale and strong beer these thirty years, and by your permission I don't know that I want wit.

Miss Bet. But you might have had more, papa, if you had been governed by my mother.

Re-enter JOHN MOODY, *with a tankard, &c.*

Sir Fran. Daughter, he that is governed by his wife, has no wit at all.

Miss Bet. Then I hope I shall marry a fool, father, for I shall love to govern dearly.

Sir Fran. Here, Humphry, here's to thee.—[*Drinks.*] You are too pert, child, it don't do well in a young woman.

Lady Head. Pray, sir Francis, don't snub her, she has a fine growing spirit, and if you check her so, you'll make her as dull as her brother there.

Squire Hum. Indeed, mother, I think my sister is too forward. [*After drinking a long draught.*

Miss Bet. You, you think I'm too forward! what have you to do to think, brother Heavy? you are too fat to think of anything but your belly.

Lady Head. Well said, miss; he's none of your master, though he's your elder brother.

Re-enter GEORGE.

George. Sir, I have no good opinion of this tawne, it's made up of mischief, I think.

Sir Fran. Why, what's the matter now?

George. I'se tell your worship; before we were gotten to the street end, a great luggerheaded cart,

with wheels as thick as a good brick wall, laid hawld of the coach, and has pood it aw to bits. An this be London, wa'd we were all weel i'th' country again.

Miss Bet. What have you to do, sir, to wish us all in the country again, lubber? I hope we shan't go in the country again these seven years, mama, let twenty coaches be pulled to pieces.

Sir Fran. Hold your tongue, Betty.—[*To* GEORGE.] Was Roger in no fault in this?

George. No, sir, nor I neither. Are not you ashamed, says Roger to the carter, to do such an unkind thing to strangers? No, says he, you bumpkin.—Sir, he did the thing on very purpose, and so the folks said that stood by; but they said your worship need na be concerned, for you might have a lawsuit with him when you pleased, that would not cost you above a hundred pounds, and mayhap you might get the better of him.

Sir Fran. I'll try what I can do with him, egad, I'll make such—

Squire Hum. Feather, have him before the parliament.

Sir Fran. And so I will: I'll make him know who I am. Where does he live?

George. I believe in London, sir.

Sir Fran. What's the villain's name?

George. I think I heard somebody call him Dick.

Sir Fran. Where did he go?

George. Sir, he went home.

Sir Fran. Where's that?

George. By my troth I do naw knaw. I heard him say he had nothing more to do with us to-night, and so he'd go home and smoke a pipe.

Lady Head. Come, sir Francis, don't put yourself in a heat, accidents will happen to people in travelling abroad to see the world. Eat your supper heartily, go to bed, sleep quietly, and to-morrow see if you can buy a handsome second-hand coach for present use, bespeak a new one, and then all's easy. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Another Room in the same.*

Enter Colonel COURTLY.

Col. Who's that, Deborah?

Enter DEBORAH.

Deb. At your service, sir.

Col. What, do you keep open house here? I found the street door as wide as it could gape.

Deb. Sir, we are all in a bustle, we have lodgers come in to-night, the house full.

Col. Where's your mistress?

Deb. Prodigious busy with her company; but I'll tell Mrs. Martilla you are here, I believe she'll come to you.

Col. That will do as well.—[*Exit* DEBORAH.] Poor Martilla! she's a very good girl, and I have loved her a great while. I think six months it is, since, like a merciless highwayman, I made her deliver all she had about her; she begged hard, poor thing, I'd leave her one small bauble. Had I let her keep it, I believe she had still kept me. Could women but refuse their ravenous lovers that one dear destructive moment, how long might they reign over them!—But for a bane to both their joys and ours, when they have indulged us with such favours as to make us adore them, they are not able to refuse us that one which puts an end to our devotion.

Enter MARTILLA.

Martilla, how dost thou do, my child?

Mar. As well as a losing gamester can.

Col. Why, what have you lost?

Mar. I have lost you.

Col. How came you to lose me?

Mar. By losing myself.

Col. We can be friends still.

Mar. Dull ones.

Col. Useful ones perhaps. Shall I help thee to a good husband?

Mar. Not if I were rich enough to live without one.

Col. I'm sorry I am not rich enough to make thee so; but we won't talk of melancholy things. Who are these folks your aunt has got in her house?

Mar. One sir Francis Headpiece and his lady, with a son and daughter.

Col. Headpiece! cotso, I know 'em a little. I met with 'em at a race in the country two years since; a sort of blockhead, is not he?

Mar. So they say.

Col. His wife seemed a mettled gentlewoman, if she had had but a fair field to range in.

Mar. That she won't want now, for they stay in town the whole winter.

Col. Oh, that will do to show all her parts in.

Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY.

How do you do, my old acquaintance?

Mrs. Moth. At your service you know always, colonel.

Col. I hear you have got good company in the house.

Mrs. Moth. I hope it will prove so; he's a parliament man only, colonel, you know there's some danger in that.

Col. Oh, never fear, he'll pay his landlady, though he don't pay his butcher.

Mrs. Moth. His wife's a clever woman.

Col. So she is.

Mrs. Moth. How do you know?

Col. I have seen her in the country, and I begin to think I'll visit her in town.

Mrs. Moth. You begin to look like a rogue.

Col. What, your wicked fancies are stirring already?

Mrs. Moth. Yours are, or I'm mistaken. But —I'll have none of your pranks played upon her.

Col. Why she's no girl, she can defend herself.

Mrs. Moth. But what if she won't?

Col. Why, then, she can blame neither you nor me.

Mrs. Moth. You'll never be quiet till you get my windows broke; but I must go and attend my lodgers, so good night.

Col. Do so, and give my service to my lady, and tell her, if she'll give me leave, I'll do myself the honour to-morrow to come and tender my services to her, as long as she stays in town.—[*Aside.*] If it ben't too long.

Mrs. Moth. I'll tell her what a devil you are, and advise her to have a care of you.

Col. Do, that will make her every time she sees me think of what I'd be at.—[*Exit* Mrs. MOTHERLY.] Dear Martilla, good night, I know you won't be my hindrance; I'll do you as good a turn some time or other. Well, I am so glad, you don't love me too much.

Mar. When that's our fate, as too, too oft we prove,
How bitterly we pay the past delights of love!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Lord LOVERULE'S *House*.

Enter Lord LOVERULE *and* Lady ARABELLA.

Lady Ara. Well, look you, my lord, I can bear it no longer; nothing still but about my faults, my faults! an agreeable subject truly!

Lord Love. But, madam, if you won't hear of your faults, how is it likely you should ever mend 'em?

Lady Ara. Why, I don't intend to mend 'em. I can't mend 'em, I have told you so a hundred times; you know I have tried to do it, over and over, and it hurts me so I can't bear it. Why, don't you know, my lord, that whenever (just to please you only) I have gone about to wean myself from a fault (one of my faults I mean that I love dearly), han't it put me so out of humour you could scarce endure the house with me?

Lord Love. Look you, my dear, it is very true, that in weaning one's self from—

Lady Ara. Weaning! why, ay, don't you see, that even in weaning poor children from the nurse it's almost the death of 'em? and don't you see your true religious people, when they go about to wean themselves, and have solemn days of fasting and praying, on purpose to help them, does it not so disorder them, there's no coming near 'em; are they not as cross as the devil? and then they don't do the business neither; for next day their faults are just where they were the day before.

Lord Love. But, madam, can you think it a reasonable thing to be abroad till two o'clock in the morning, when you know I go to bed at eleven?

Lady Ara. And can you think it a wise thing (to talk your own way now) to go to bed at eleven, when you know I am likely to disturb you by coming there at three?

Lord Love. Well, the manner of women's living of late is insupportable, and some way or other—

Lady Ara. It's to be mended, I suppose.—Pray, my lord, one word of fair argument. You complain of my late hours; I of your early ones; so far we are even, you'll allow. But which gives us the best figure in the eye of the polite world? My two o'clock speaks life, activity, spirit, and vigour; your eleven has a dull, drowsy, stupid, good-for-nothing sound with it. It savours much of a mechanic, who must get to bed betimes that he may rise early to open his shop, faugh!

Lord Love. I thought to go to bed early and rise so, was ever esteemed a right practice for all people.

Lady Ara. Beasts do it.

Lord Love. Fy, fy, madam, fy! But 'tis not your ill hours alone disturb me; but the ill company who occasion those ill hours.

Lady Ara. And pray what ill company may those be?

Lord Love. Why, women that lose their money, and men that win it: especially when 'tis to be paid out of their husband's estate; or if that fail, and the creditor be a little pressing, the lady will perhaps be obliged to try if the gentleman, instead of gold, will accept of a trinket.

Lady Ara. My lord, you grow scurrilous, and you'll make me hate you. I'll have you to know I keep company with the politest people in the town, and the assemblies I frequent are full of such.

Lord Love. So are the churches now and then.

Lady Ara. My friends frequent them often, as well as the assemblies.

Lord Love. They would do it oftener, if a groom of the chamber there were allowed to furnish cards and dice to the company.

Lady Ara. You'd make a woman mad!

Lord Love. You'd make a man a fool.

Lady Ara. If Heaven has made you otherwise, that won't be in my power.

Lord Love. I'll try if I can prevent your making me a beggar at least.

Lady Ara. A beggar! Crœsus! I'm out of patience!—I won't come home till four to-morrow morning.

Lord Love. I'll order the doors to be locked at twelve.

Lady Ara. Then I won't come home till to-morrow night.

Lord Love. Then you shall never come home again, madam. [*Exit.*

Lady Ara. There he has knocked me down. My father upon our marriage said, wives were come to that pass, he did not think it fit they should be trusted with pin-money, and so would not let this man settle one penny upon his poor wife, to serve her at a dead lift for separate maintenance.

Enter CLARINDA.

Clar. Good-morrow, madam; how do you do to-day? you seem to be in a little fluster.

Lady Ara. My lord has been in one, and as I am the most complaisant poor creature in the world, I put myself into one too, purely to be suitable company to him.

Clar. You are prodigious good; but surely it must be mighty agreeable when a man and his wife can give themselves the same turn of conversation.

Lady Ara. Oh, the prettiest thing in the world!

Clar. But yet, though I believe there's no life so happy as a married one, in the main; yet I fancy, where two people are so very much together, they must often be in want of something to talk upon.

Lady Ara. Clarinda, you are the most mistaken in the world; married people have things to talk of, child, that never enter into the imagination of others. Why now, here's my lord and I, we han't been married above two short years, you know, and we have already eight or ten things constantly in bank, that whenever we want company, we can talk of any one of them for two hours together, and the subject never the flatter. It will be as fresh next day, if we have occasion for it, as it was the first day it entertained us.

Clar. Why that must be wonderful pretty.

Lady Ara. Oh, there's no life like it! This very day now, for example, my lord and I, after a pretty cheerful *tête-à-tête* dinner, sat down by the fireside, in an idle, indolent, picktooth way for a while, as if we had not thought of one another's

being in the room. At last (stretching himself, and yawning twice), my dear, says he, you came home very late last night. 'Twas but two in the morning, says I. I was in bed (yawning) by eleven, says he. So you are every night, says I. Well, says he, I am amazed how you can sit up so late. How can you be amazed, says I, at a thing that happens so often? Upon which we entered into conversation. And though this is a point has entertained us above fifty times already, we always find so many pretty new things to say upon't, that I believe in my soul it will last as long as we live.

Clar. But in such sort of family dialogues (though extremely well for passing of time) don't there now and then enter some little witty sort of bitterness?

Lady Ara. O yes; which don't do amiss at all, a little something that's sharp, moderates the extreme sweetness of matrimonial society, which would else perhaps be cloying. Though to tell you the truth, Clarinda, I think we squeezed a little too much lemon into it this bout; for it grew so sour at last, that I think I almost told him he was a fool; and he talked something oddly of turning me out of doors.

Clar. Oh, but have a care of that!

Lady Ara. Why, to be serious, Clarinda, what would you have a woman do in my case? There is no one thing he can do in this world to please me—except giving me money; and that he is growing weary of; and I at the same time (partly by nature, and partly perhaps by keeping the best company) do with my soul love almost everything that he hates. I dote upon assemblies, adore masquerades, my heart bounds at a ball; I love play to distraction, cards enchant me, and dice—put me out of my little wits.—Dear, dear hazard, what music there is in the rattle of the dice, compared to a sleepy opera! Do you ever play at hazard, Clarinda?

Clar. Never; I don't think it sits well upon women; it's very masculine, and has too much of a rake; you see how it makes the men swear and curse. Sure it must incline the women to do the same too, if they durst give way to it.

Lady Ara. So it does; but hitherto, for a little decency, we keep it in; and when, in spite of our teeth, an oath gets into our mouths, we swallow it.

Clar. That's enough to burst you; but in time perhaps you'll let 'em fly as they do.

Lady Ara. Why 'tis probable we may, for the pleasure of all polite women's lives now, you know, is founded upon entire liberty to do what they will. But shall I tell you what happened t'other night? Having lost all my money but ten melancholy guineas, and throwing out for them, what do you think slipped from me?

Clar. An oath?

Lady Ara. Gud soons!

Clar. O Lord! O Lord! did not it frighten you out of your wits?

Lady Ara. Clarinda, I thought a gun had gone off.—But I forget, you are a prude, and design to live soberly.

Clar. Why 'tis true; both my nature and education do in a good degree incline me that way.

Lady Ara. Well, surely to be sober is to be terribly dull. You will marry, won't you?

Clar. I can't tell but I may.

Lady Ara. And you'll live in town?

Clar. Half the year I should like it very well.

Lady Ara. And you would live in London half a year, to be sober in it?

Clar. Yes.

Lady Ara. Why can't you as well go and be sober in the country?

Clar. So I would the t'other half year.

Lady Ara. And pray what pretty scheme of life would you form now, for your summer and winter sober entertainments?

Clar. A scheme that, I think, might very well content us.

Lady Ara. Let's hear it.

Clar. I could in summer pass my time very agreeably, in riding soberly, in walking soberly, in sitting under a tree soberly, in gardening soberly, in reading soberly, in hearing a little music soberly, in conversing with some agreeable friends soberly, in working soberly, in managing my family and children (if I had any) soberly, and possibly by these means I might induce my husband to be as sober as myself.

Lady Ara. Well, Clarinda, thou art a most contemptible creature. But let's have the sober town scheme too, for I'm charmed with the country one.

Clar. You shall, and I'll try to stick to my sobriety there too.

Lady Ara. If you do, you'll make me sick of you. But let's hear it however.

Clar. I would entertain myself in observing the new fashions soberly, I would please myself in new clothes soberly, I would divert myself with agreeable friends at home and abroad soberly, I would play at quadrille soberly, I would go to court soberly, I would go to some plays soberly, I would go to operas soberly, and I think I could go once, or, if I liked my company, twice to a masquerade soberly.

Lady Ara. If it had not been for that last piece of sobriety, I was going to call for some surfeit-water.

Clar. Why don't you think, that with the further aid of breakfasting, dining, supping, and sleeping (not to say a word of devotion), the four-and-twenty hours might roll over in a tolerable manner?

Lady Ara. How I detest that word, tolerable! And so will a country relation of ours, that's newly come to town, or I'm mistaken.

Clar. Who is that?

Lady Ara. Even my dear lady Headpiece.

Clar. Is she come?

Lady Ara. Yes, her sort of a tolerable husband has gotten to be chosen parliament-man at some simple town or other, upon which she has persuaded him to bring her and her folks up to London.

Clar. That's good; I think she was never here before.

Lady Ara. Not since she was nine years old; but she has had an outrageous mind to it ever since she was married.

Clar. Then she'll make the most of it, I suppose, now she is come,

Lady Ara. Depend upon that.

Clar. We must go and visit her.

Lady Ara. By all means; and may be you'll have a mind to offer her your tolerable scheme for her London diversion this winter; if you do,

mistress, I'll show her mine too, and you shall see she'll so despise you and adore me, that if I do but chirrup to her, she'll hop after me like a tame sparrow, the town round. But there's your admirer I see coming in, I'll oblige him, and leave you to receive part of his visit, while I step up to write a letter. Besides, to tell you the truth, I don't like him half so well as I used to do; he falls off of late from being the company he was, in our way. In short, I think he's growing to be a little like my lord. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir CHARLES.

Sir Char. Madam, your servant; they told me lady Arabella was here.

Clar. She's only stepped up to write a letter; she'll come down presently.

Sir Char. Why, does she write letters? I thought she had never time for't: pray how may she have disposed of the rest of the day?

Clar. A good deal as usual; she has visits to make till six; she's then engaged to the play; from that till court-time she's to be at cards at Mrs. Idle's; after the drawing-room she takes a short supper with lady Hazard, and from thence they go together to the assembly.

Sir Char. And are you to do all this with her?

Clar. The visits and the play, no more.

Sir Char. And how can you forbear all the rest?

Clar. 'Tis easy to forbear what we are not very fond of.

Sir Char. I han't found it so. I have passed much of my life in this hurry of the ladies, yet was never so pleased as when I was at quiet without 'em.

Clar. What then induced you to be with 'em?

Sir Char. Idleness and the fashion.

Clar. No mistresses in the case?

Sir Char. To speak honestly, yes. When one is in a toyshop, there was no forbearing the baubles; so I was perpetually engaging with some coquette or other, whom I could love perhaps just enough to put it into her power to plague me.

Clar. Which power I suppose she sometimes made use of.

Sir Char. The amours of a coquette, madam, generally mean nothing farther; I look upon them and prudes to be nuisances much alike, though they seem very different: the first are always disturbing the men, and the latter always abusing the women.

Clar. And all I think is to establish the character of being virtuous.

Sir Char. That is, being chaste they mean, for they know no other virtue; therefore indulge themselves in everything else that's vicious; they (against nature) keep their chastity only because they find more pleasure in doing mischief with it than they should have in parting with it. But, madam, if both these characters are so odious, how highly to be valued is that woman who can attain all they aim at without the aid of the folly or vice of either!

Re-enter Lady ARABELLA.

Lady Ara. Your servant, sir. I won't ask your pardon for leaving you alone a little with a lady that I know shares so much of your good opinion.

Sir Char. I wish, madam, she could think my good opinion of value enough to afford me a small part in hers.

Lady Ara. I believe, sir, every woman, who knows she has a place in a fine gentleman's good opinion, will be glad to give him one in hers if she can. But however you two may stand in one another's, you must take another time if you desire to talk farther about it, or we shan't have enough to make our visits in; and so your servant, sir.—Come, Clarinda.

Sir Char. I'll stay and make my lord a visit, if you will give me leave.

Lady Ara. You have my leave, sir, though you were a lady. [*Exit with* CLARINDA.

Re-enter Lord LOVERULE.

Lord Love. Sir Charles, your servant;—what, have the ladies left you?

Sir Char. Yes; and the ladies in general I hope will leave me too.

Lord Love. Why so?

Sir Char. That I mayn't be put to the ill-manners of leaving them first.

Lord Love. Do you then already find your gallantry inclining to an ebb?

Sir Char. 'Tis not that I am yet old enough to justify myself in an idle retreat, but I have got, I think, a sort of surfeit on me that lessens much the force of female charms.

Lord Love. Have you then been so glutted with their favours?

Sir Char. Not with their favours, but with their service; it is unmerciful. I once thought myself a tolerable time-killer; I drank, I played, I intrigued, and yet I had hours enow for reasonable uses; but he that will list himself a lady's man of metal now, she'll work him so at cards and dice, she won't afford him time enough to play with her at anything else, though she herself should have a tolerable good mind to it.

Lord Love. And so the disorderly lives they lead make you incline to a reform of your own.

Sir Char. 'Tis true; for bad examples (if they are but bad enough) give us as useful reflections as good ones do.

Lord Love. 'Tis pity anything that's bad should come from women.

Sir Char. 'Tis so indeed; and there was a happy time when both you and I thought there never could.

Lord Love. Our early first conceptions of them I well remember, were, that they never could be vicious, nor never could be old.

Sir Char. We thought so then; the beauteous form we saw them cast in, seemed designed a habitation for no vice, nor no decay; all I had conceived of angels I conceived of them; true, tender, gentle, modest, generous, constant, I thought was writ in every feature; and in my devotions Heaven, how did I adore thee, that blessings like them should be the portion of such poor inferior creatures as I took myself and all men else (compared with them) to be!—But where's that adoration now?

Lord Love. 'Tis with such fond young fools as you and I were then.

Sir Char. And with such it ever will be.

Lord Love. Ever. The pleasure is so great in believing women to be what we wish them, that nothing but a long and sharp experience can ever make us think them otherwise. That experience, friend, both you and I have had; but yours has been at other men's expense; mine—at my own.

Sir Char. Perhaps you'd wonder should you find me disposed to run the risk of that experience too.

Lord Love. I should indeed.

Sir Char. And yet 'tis possible I may; know, at least, I still have so much of my early folly left, to think there's yet one woman fit to make a wife of. How far such a one can answer the charms of a mistress, married men are silent in, so pass—for that, I'd take my chance; but could she make a home easy to her partner, by letting him find there a cheerful companion, an agreeable intimate, a useful assistant, a faithful friend, and (in its time perhaps) a tender mother, such change of life, from what I lead, seems not unwise to think of.

Lord Love. Not unwise to purchase, if to be had for millions; but—

Sir Char. But what?

Lord Love. If the reverse of this should chance to be the bitter disappointment, what would the life be then?

Sir Char. A damned one.

Lord Love. And what relief?

Sir Char. A short one; leave it, and return to that you left, if you can't find a better.

Lord Love. [*Aside.*] He says right.—That's the remedy, and a just one.—For if I sell my liberty for gold, and I am foully paid in brass, shall I be held to keep the bargain?

Sir Char. What are you thinking of?

Lord Love. Of what you have said.

Sir Char. And was it well said?

Lord Love. I begin to think it might.

Sir Char. Think on, 'twill give you ease.—The man who has courage enough to part with a wife, need not much dread the having one; and he that has not ought to tremble at being a husband.—But perhaps I have said too much; you'll pardon, however, the freedom of an old friend, because you know I am so; so your servant.

Lord Love. Charles, farewell! I can take nothing as ill meant that comes from you.—[*Exit* Sir Charles.] Nor ought my wife to think I mean amiss to her, if I convince her I'll endure no longer that she should thus expose herself and me. No doubt 'twill grieve her sorely. Physic's a loathsome thing till we find it gives us health, and then we are thankful to those who made us take it. Perhaps she may do so by me; if she does 'tis well; if not, and she resolves to make the house ring with reprisals, I believe (though the misfortune's great) he'll make a better figure in the world who keeps an ill wife out of doors than he that keeps her within. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Mrs. Motherly's *House.*

Enter Lady Headpiece *and* Mrs. Motherly.

Lady Head. So, you are acquainted with Lady Arabella, I find.

Mrs. Moth. Oh, madam, I have had the honour to know her ladyship almost from a child, and a charming woman she has made.

Lady Head. I like her prodigiously; I had some acquaintance with her in the country two years ago; but she's quite another woman here.

Mrs. Moth. Ah, madam, two years keeping company with the polite people of the town will do wonders in the improvement of a lady, so she has it but about her.

Lady Head. Now 'tis my misfortune, Mrs. Motherly, to come late to school.

Mrs. Moth. Oh! don't be discouraged at that, madam, the quickness of your ladyship's parts will easily recover your loss of a little time.

Lady Head. Oh, you flatter me! But I'll endeavour, by industry and application, to make it up; such parts as I have shall not lie idle. My lady Arabella has been so good to offer me already her introduction to those assemblies where a woman may soonest learn to make herself valuable to everybody.

Mrs. Moth. [*Aside.*] But her husband.—[*Aloud.*] Her ladyship, madam, can indeed, better than anybody, introduce you where everything that accomplishes a fine lady is practised to the last perfection. Madam, she herself is at the very tip top of it—'tis pity, poor lady, she should meet with any discouragements.

Lady Head. Discouragements! from whence pray?

Mrs. Moth. From home sometimes—my lord a—

Lady Head. What does he do?

Mrs. Moth. But one should not talk of people of quality's family concerns.

Lady Head. Oh, no matter, Mrs. Motherly, as long as it goes no farther. My lord, you were saying—

Mrs. Moth. Why, my lord, madam, is a little humoursome, they say.

Lady Head. Humoursome!

Mrs. Moth. Yes, they say he's humoursome.

Lady Head. As how, pray?

Mrs. Moth. Why, if my poor lady perhaps does but stay out at night maybe four or five hours after he's in bed, he'll be cross.

Lady Head. What, for such a thing as that?

Mrs. Moth. Yes, he'll be cross; and then, if she happens, it may be, to be unfortunate at play, and lose a great deal of money, more than she has to pay, then madam—he'll snub.

Lady Head. Out upon him, snub such a woman as she is? I can tell you, Mrs. Motherly, I that am but a country lady, should sir Francis take upon him to snub me, in London, he'd raise a spirit would make his hair stand an end.

Mrs. Moth. Really, madam, that's the only way to deal with 'em.

Enter Miss Betty.

And here comes pretty Miss Betty, that I believe will never be made a fool of when she's married.

Miss Bet. No, by my troth won't I. What, are you talking of my being married, mother?

Lady Head. No, miss; Mrs. Motherly was only

saying what a good wife you would make when you were so.

Miss Bet. The sooner it's tried, mother, the sooner it will be known.—Lord, here's the colonel, madam.

Enter Colonel Courtly.

Lady Head. Colonel, your servant.

Miss Bet. Your servant, colonel.

Col. Ladies, your most obedient.—I hope, madam, the town air continues to agree with you?

Lady Head. Mighty well, sir.

Miss Bet. Oh, prodigious well, sir. We have bought a new coach, and an ocean of new clothes, and we are to go to the play to-night, and to-morrow we go to the opera, and next night we go to the assembly, and then the next night after, we—

Lady Head. Softly, miss.—Do you go to the play to-night, colonel?

Col. I did not design it, madam; but now I find there is to be such good company, I'll do myself the honour (if you'll give me leave, ladies) to come and lead you to your coach.

Lady Head. It's extremely obliging.

Miss Bet. It is, indeed, mighty well-bred.—Lord, colonel, what a difference there is between your way and our country companions! One of them would have said, What, you are aw gooing to the playhouse, then? Yes, says we, won't you come and lead us out? No, by good feggings, says he, ye ma' e'en ta' care o' yoursels, y' are awd enough; and so he'd ha' gone to get drunk at the tavern against we came home to supper.

Mrs. Moth. Ha! ha! ha! well, sure madam, your ladyship is the happiest mother in the world to have such a charming companion to your daughter.

Col. The prettiest creature upon earth!

Miss Bet. D'ye hear that, mother? Well, he's a fine gentleman really, and I think a man of admirable sense.

Lady Head. Softly, miss, he'll hear you.

Miss Bet. If he does, madam, he'll think I say true, and he'll like me never the worse for that, I hope.—Where's your niece Martilla, Mrs. Motherly?—Mama, won't you carry Martilla to the play with us?

Lady Head. With all my heart, child.

Col. She's a very pretty civil sort of woman, madam, and miss will be very happy in having such a companion in the house with her.

Miss Bet. So I shall indeed, sir, and I love her dearly already, we are growing very great together.

Lady Head. But what's become of your brother, child? I han't seen him these two hours, where is he?

Miss Bet. Indeed, mother, I don't know where he is; I saw him asleep about half an hour ago by the kitchen fire.

Col. Must not he go to the play too?

Lady Head. Yes, I think he should go, though he'll be weary on't before it's half done.

Miss Bet. Weary! yes, and then he'll sit, and yawn, and stretch like a greyhound by the fireside, till he does some nasty thing or other, that they'll turn him out of the house, so it's better to leave him at home.

Mrs. Moth. Oh, that were pity, miss. Plays will enliven him.—See, here he comes, and my niece with him.

Enter Squire Humphry *and* Martilla.

Col. Your servant, sir; you come in good time, the ladies are all going to the play, and wanted you to help gallant them.

Squire Hum. And so 'twill be nine o'clock before one shall get ony supper!

Miss Bet. Supper! why your dinner is not out of your mouth yet, at least 'tis all about the brims of it.—See how greasy his chaps is, mother.

Lady Head. Nay, if he han't a mind to go, he need not.—You may stay here till your father comes home from the parliament house, and then you may eat a broiled bone together.

Miss Bet. Yes, and drink a tankard of strong beer together, and then he may tell you all he has been doing in the parliament house, and you may tell him all you have been thinking of when you were asleep in the kitchen; and then if you'll put it all down in writing, when we come from the play, I'll read it to the company.

Squire Hum. Sister I don't like your joking, and you are not a well-behaved young woman; and although my mother encourages you, my thoughts are, you are not too big to be whipped.

Miss Bet. How, sirrah?

Squire Hum. There's a civil young gentlewoman stands there is worth a hundred of you. And I believe she'll be married before you.

Miss Bet. Cots my life, I have a good mind to pull your eyes out!

Lady Head. Hold, miss, hold, don't be in such a passion neither.

Miss Bet. Mama, it is not that I am angry at anything he says to commend Martilla, for I wish she were to be married to-morrow, that I might have a dance at her wedding; but what need he abuse me for?—[*Aside.*] I wish the lout had mettle enough to be in love with her, she'd make pure sport with him.—[*Aloud.*] Does your heaviness find any inclinations moving towards the lady you admire?—Speak! are you in love with her?

Squire Hum. I am in love with nobody; and if anybody be in love with me, mayhap they had as good be quiet.

Miss Bet. Hold your tongue, I'm quite sick of you.—Come, Martilla, you are to go to the play with us.

Mart. Am I, miss? I am ready to wait upon you.

Lady Head. I believe it's time we should be going, colonel, is not it?

Col. Yes, madam, I believe it is.

Lady Head. Come then; who is there?

Enter Tom.

Is the coach at the door?

Tom. It has been there this hafe haur, so please your ladyship.

Miss Bet. And are all the people in the street gazing at it, Tom?

Tom. That are they, madam; and Roger has drank so much of his own beverage, that he's e'en as it were gotten a little drunk.

Lady Head. Not so drunk, I hope, but that he can drive us?

Tom. Yes, yes, madam, he drives best when he's a little upish. When Roger's head turns, raund go the wheels, i'faith.

Miss Bet. Never fear, mama, as long as it's to the playhouse there's no danger.

Lady Head. Well, daughter, since you are so courageous, it shan't be said I make any difficulty; and if the colonel is so gallant to have a mind to share our danger, we have room for him, if he pleases.

Col. Madam, you do me a great deal of honour, and I'm sure you give me a great deal of pleasure.

Miss Bet. Come, dear mama, away we go.

[*Exeunt* Lady HEADPIECE, Miss BETTY, Colonel COURTLY, *and* TOM.

Squire Hum. [*To* MARTILLA.] I did not think you would have gone.

Mart. Oh, I love a play dearly. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Moth. I wonder, squire, that you would not go to the play with 'em.

Squire Hum. What needed Martilla have gone? they were enow without her.

Mrs. Moth. Oh, she was glad to go to divert herself; and, besides, my lady desired her to go with them.

Squire Hum. And so I'm left alone!

Mrs. Moth. Why, should you have cared for her company?

Squire Hum. Rather than none.

Mrs. Moth. [*Aside.*] On my conscience he's ready to cry; this is matter to think of; but here comes sir Francis.

Enter SIR FRANCIS.

How do you do, sir? I'm afraid these late parliament hours won't agree with you.

Sir Fran. Indeed, I like them not, Mrs. Motherly; if they would dine at twelve o'clock as we do in the country, a man might be able to drink a reasonable bottle between that and supper-time.

Mrs. Moth. That would be much better indeed, sir Francis.

Sir Fran. But then when we consider that what we undergo is in being busy for the good of our country.—Oh, the good of our country is above all things! What a noble and glorious thing it is, Mrs. Motherly, that England can boast of five hundred zealous gentlemen, all in one room, all of one mind, upon a fair occasion, to go all together by the ears for the good of their country!—Humphry, perhaps you'll be a senator in time, as your father is now; when you are, remember your country; spare nothing for the good of your country; and when you come home at the end of the sessions, you will find yourself so adored, that your country will come and dine with you every day in the week.—Oh, here's my uncle Richard.

Enter UNCLE RICHARD.

Mrs. Moth. I think, sir, I had best get you a mouthful of something to stay your stomach till supper.

Sir Fran. With all my heart, for I'm almost famished. [*Exit* MRS. MOTHERLY.

Squire Hum. And so shall I before my mother comes from the playhouse, so I'll go get a buttered toast. [*Exit.*

Sir Fran. Uncle, I hope you are well.

Unc. Rich. Nephew, if I had been sick I would not have come abroad; I suppose you are well, for I sent this morning and was informed you went out early; was it to make your court to some of the great men?

Sir Fran. Yes, uncle, I was advised to lose no time, so I went to one great man whom I had never seen before.

Unc. Rich. And who had you got to introduce you?

Sir Fran. Nobody. I remembered I had heard a wise man say, My son, be bold; so I introduced myself.

Unc. Rich. As how, I pray?

Sir Fran. Why thus, uncle; Please your lordship, says I, I am sir Francis Headpiece, of Headpiece-hall, and member of parliament for the ancient borough of Gobble-guinea. Sir, your humble servant, says my lord, though I have not the honour to know your person, I have heard you are a very honest gentleman, and I am very glad your borough has made choice of so worthy a representative; have you any service to command me? Those last words, uncle, gave me great encouragement; and though I know you have not any very great opinion of my parts, I believe you won't say I missed it now.

Unc. Rich. I hope I shall have no cause.

Sir Fran. My lord, says I, I did not design to say anything to your lordship to-day about business; but since your lordship is so kind and free, as to bid me speak if I have any service to command you, I will.

Unc. Rich. So!

Sir Fran. I have, says I, my lord, a good estate, but it's a little aut at elbows, and as I desire to serve my king as well as my country, I shall be very willing to accept of a place at court.

Unc. Rich. This was bold indeed.

Sir Fran. Ecod, I shot him flying, uncle; another man would have been a month before he durst have opened his mauth about a place. But you shall hear. Sir Francis, says my lord, what sort of a place may you have turned your thoughts upon? My lord, says I, beggars must not be choosers; but some place about a thousand a-year, I believe, might do pretty weel to begin with. Sir Francis, says he, I shall be glad to serve you in anything I can; and in saying these words he gave me a squeeze by the hand, as much as to say, I'll do your business. And so he turned to a lord that was there, who looked as if he came for a place too.

Unc. Rich. And so your fortune's made?

Sir Fran. Don't you think so, uncle?

Unc. Rich. Yes, for just so mine was made—twenty years ago.

Sir Fran. Why, I never knew you had a place, uncle!

Unc. Rich. Nor I neither, upon my faith, nephew. But you have been down at the house since you made your court, have not you?

Sir Fran. O yes; I would not neglect the house for ever so much.

Unc. Rich. And what may they have done there to-day, I pray?

Sir Fran. Why truly, uncle, I cannot well tell what they did. But I'll tell you what I did: I happened to make a little sort of a mistake.

Unc. Rich. How was that?

Sir Fran. Why you must know, uncle, they were all got into a sort of a hodge-podge argument for the good of the nation, which I did not well understand. However, I was convinced, and so resolved to vote aright, according to my conscience; but they made such a puzzling business on't, when they put the question, as they call it, that, I believe, I cried ay when I should have cried no; for a sort

of a Jacobite that sate next me, took me by the hand, and said,—Sir, you are a man of honour, and a true Englishman, and I should be glad to be better acquainted with you; and so he pulled me along with the crowd into the lobby with him, when, I believe, I should have staid where I was.

Unc. Rich. And so, if you had not quite made your fortune before, you have clenched it now.—[*Aside.*] Ah, thou head of the Headpieces!—[*Aloud.*] How now, what's the matter here?

Re-enter Lady HEADPIECE, Miss BETTY, Colonel COURTLY, Squire HUMPHRY, *and* MARTILLA, *in disorder, some dirty, some lame, some bloody.*

Sir Fran. Mercy on us! they are all killed.

Miss Bet. Not for a thousand pounds; but we have been all down in the dirt together.

Lady Head. We have had a sad piece of work on't, sir Francis; overturned in the channel as we were going to the playhouse.

Miss Bet. Over and over, papa; had it been coming from the playhouse I should not have cared a farthing.

Sir Fran. But, child, you are hurt, your face is all bloody.

Miss Bet. O sir, my new gown is all dirty.

Lady Head. The new coach is all spoiled.

Miss Bet. The glasses are all to bits.

Lady Head. Roger has put out his arm.

Miss Bet. Would he had put out his neck for making us lose the play!

Squire Hum. Poor Martilla has scratched her little finger.

Lady Head. And here's the poor colonel, nobody asks what he has done.—I hope, sir, you have got no harm?

Col. Only a little wounded with some pins I met with about your ladyship.

Lady Head. I am sorry anything about me should do you harm.

Col. If it does, madam, you have that about you, if you please, will be my cure. I hope your ladyship feels nothing amiss?

Lady Head. Nothing at all, though we did roll about together strangely.

Col. We did indeed. I'm sure we rolled so, that my poor hands were got once—I don't know where they were got.—But her ladyship I see will pass by slips. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. It would have been pity the colonel should have received any damage in his services to the ladies; he is the most complaisant man to 'em, uncle; always ready when they have occasion for him.

Unc. Rich. Then I believe, nephew, they'll never let him want business.

Sir Fran. Oh, but they should not ride the free horse to death neither.—Come, colonel, you'll stay and drink a bottle, and eat a little supper with us, after your misfortune?

Col. Sir, since I have been prevented from attending the ladies to the play, I shall be very proud to obey their commands here at home.

Sir Fran. A prodigious civil gentleman, uncle; and yet as bold as Alexander upon occasion.

Unc. Rich. Upon a lady's occasion.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, you are a wag, uncle! but I believe he'd storm anything.

Unc. Rich. Then I believe your citadel may be in danger. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Uncle, won't you break your rule for once, and sup from home?

Unc. Rich. The company will excuse me, nephew; they'll be freer without me; so good night to them and you.

Lady Head. Good night to you, sir, since you won't stay.—Come, colonel.

Unc. Rich. [*Aside.*] Methinks this facetious colonel is got upon a pretty, familiar, easy foot already with the family of the Headpieces—hum. [*Exit.*

Sir Fran. Come, my lady, let's all in, and pass the evening cheerfully. And d'ye hear, wife—a word in your ear—I have got a promise of a place in court, of a thousand a-year, he, hem! [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Lady ARABELLA'S *Dressing-room.*

Enter Lady ARABELLA, *as just up, walking pensively to her toilet, followed by* TRUSTY.

Lady Ara. Well, sure never woman had such luck!—these devilish dice!—Sit up all night; lose all one's money, and then—how like a hag I look!—[*Sits at her toilet, turning her purse inside out.*] Not a guinea—worth less by a hundred pounds than I was at one a clock this morning—and then—I was worth nothing—what is to be done, Trusty?

Trus. I wish I were wise enough to tell you, madam: but if there comes in any good company to breakfast with your ladyship, perhaps you may have a run of better fortune.

Lady Ara. But I han't a guinea to try my fortune.—Let me see—who was that impertinent man, that was so saucy last week about money, that I was forced to promise, once more, he should have what I owed him this morning?

Trus. Oh, I remember, madam; it was your old mercer Shortyard, that you turned off a year ago, because he would trust you no longer.

Lady Ara. That's true; and I think I bid the steward keep thirty guineas out of some money he was paying me, to stop his odious mouth.

Trus. Your ladyship did so.

Lady Ara. Prithee, Trusty, run and see whether the wretch has got the money yet; if not, tell the steward I have occasion for it myself; run quickly. [TRUSTY *runs to the door.*

Trus. Ah, madam, he's just a-paying it away now, in the hall.

Lady Ara. Stop him! quick, quick, dear Trusty.

Trus. Hem, hem, Mr. Moneybag, a word with you quickly.

Mon. [*Within.*] I'll come presently.

Trus. Presently won't do, you must come this moment.

Mon. I'm but just paying a little money.

Trus. Cods my life, paying money! is the man distracted? Come here, I tell you, to my lady this moment, quick.

Enter MONEYBAG *to the door, with a purse in his hand.*

My lady says, you must not pay the money to-day, there's a mistake in the account, which she must examine; and she's afraid too there was a false guinea or two left in the purse, which might disgrace her.—[*Twitches the purse from him.*] But she's too busy to look for 'em just now, so you must bid Mr. What-d'ye-call-'em come another time. — [*Exit* MONEYBAG.] There they are, madam.—[*Gives* Lady ARABELLA *the money.*] The poor things were so near gone they made me tremble. I fancy your ladyship will give me one of those false guineas for good luck.—[*Takes a guinea.*] Thank you, madam.

Lady Ara. Why, I did not bid you take it.

Trus. No, but your ladyship looked as if you were just going to bid me, so I took it to save your ladyship the trouble of speaking.

Lady Ara. Well, for once—but hark—I think I hear the man making a noise yonder.

Trus. Nay, I don't expect he'll go out of the house quietly. I'll listen.

Lady Ara. Do. [TRUSTY *goes to the door.*

Trus. He's in a bitter passion with poor Moneybag; I believe he'll beat him.—Lord, how he swears!

Lady Ara. And a sober citizen too! that's a shame.

Trus. He says he will speak with you, madam, though the devil held your door.—Lord! he's coming hither full drive, but I'll lock him out.

Lady Ara. No matter, let him come: I'll reason with him.

Trus. But he's a saucy fellow for all that.

Enter SHORTYARD.

What would you have, sir?

Short. I would have my due, mistress.

Trus. That would be—to be well cudgelled, master, for coming so familiarly where you should not come.

Lady Ara. Do you think you do well, sir, to intrude into my dressing-room?

Short. Madam, I sold my goods to you in your dressing-room, I don't know why I mayn't ask for my money there.

Lady Ara. You are very short, sir.

Short. Your ladyship won't complain of my patience being so?

Lady Ara. I complain of nothing that ought not to be complained of; but I hate ill manners.

Short. So do I, madam—but this is the seventeenth time I have been ordered to come, with good manners, for my money, to no purpose.

Lady Ara. Your money, man! is that the matter? Why it has lain in the steward's hands this week for you.

Short. Madam, you yourself appointed me to come this very morning for it.

Lady Ara. But why did you come so late then?

Short. So late! I came soon enough, I thought.

Lady Ara. That thinking wrong makes us liable to a world of disappointments; if you had thought of coming one minute sooner, you had had your money.

Short. Gad bless me, madam; I had the money as I thought, I'm sure it was telling out, and I was writing a receipt for't.

Trus. Why, there you thought wrong again, master.

Lady Ara. Yes, for you should never think of writing a receipt till the money is in your pocket.

Short. Why, I did think 'twas in my pocket.

Trus. Look you, thinking again! Indeed, Mr. Shortyard, you make so many blunders, 'tis impossible but you must suffer by it, in your way of trade. I'm sorry for you, and you'll be undone.

Short. And well I may, when I sell my goods to people that won't pay me for 'em, till the interest of my money eats out all my profit: I sold them so cheap, because I thought I should be paid the next day.

Trus. Why, there again! there's another of your thoughts. Paid the next day! and you han't been paid this twelvemonth, you see.

Short. Oons, I han't been paid at all, mistress.

Lady Ara. Well, tradesmen are strange, unreasonable creatures, refuse to sell people any more things, and then quarrel with 'em because they don't pay for those they have had already. Now, what can you say to that, Mr. Shortyard?

Short. Say! why—'sdeath, madam, I don't know what you talk of, I don't understand your argument.

Lady Ara. Why, what do you understand, man?

Short. Why, I understand that I have had above a hundred pounds due to me a year ago; that I came by appointment just now to receive it; that it proved at last to be but thirty instead of a hundred and ten; and that, while the steward was telling even that out, and I was writing the receipt, comes Mrs. Pop here, and the money was gone. But I'll be bantered no longer if there's law in England. Say no more, Shortyard. [*Exit.*

Trus. What a passion the poor devil's in!

Lady Ara. Why, truly, one can't deny but he has some present cause for a little ill-humour; but when one has things of so much greater consequence on foot, one can't trouble oneself about making such creatures easy; so call for breakfast, Trusty, and set the hazard-table ready; if there comes no company I'll play a little by myself.

Enter Lord LOVERULE.

Lord Love. Pray what offence, madam, have you given to a man I met with just now as I came in?

Lady Ara. People who are apt to take offence do it for small matters, you know.

Lord Love. I shall be glad to find this so; but he says that you have owed him above a hundred pounds this twelvemonth; that he has been here forty times by appointment for it, to no purpose; and that coming here this morning upon positive assurance from yourself, he was tricked out of the money while he was writing a receipt for it, and sent away without a farthing.

Lady Ara. Lord, how these shopkeepers will lie!

Lord Love. What then is the business? For some ground the man must have to be in such a passion.

Lady Ara. I believe you'll rather wonder to see

me so calm, when I tell you he had the insolence to intrude into my very dressing-room here, with a story without a head or tail.—You know, Trusty, we could not understand one word he said, but when he swore—good Lord! how the wretch did swear!

Trus. I never heard the like, for my part.

Lord Love. And all this for nothing?

Lady Ara. So it proved, my lord, for he got nothing by it.

Lord Love. His swearing I suppose was for his money, madam. Who can blame him?

Lady Ara. If he swore for money he should be put in the pillory.

Lord Love. Madam, I won't be bantered, nor sued by this man for your extravagances. Do you owe him the money or not?

Lady Ara. He says I do, but such fellows will say anything.

Lord Love. [*Aside.*] Provoking!—[*Aloud.*] Did not I desire an account from you, of all your debts, but six months since, and give you money to clear them?

Lady Ara. My lord, you can't imagine how accounts make my head ache.

Lord Love. That won't do. The steward gave you two hundred pounds besides but last week; where's that?

Lady Ara. Gone.

Lord Love. Gone! where?

Lady Ara. Half the town over I believe by this time.

Lord Love. Madam, madam, this can be endured no longer! and before a month passes expect to find me—

Lady Ara. Hist, my lord, here's company.

Enter Captain TOUPEE.

Captain Toupee, your servant; what, nobody with you? do you come quite alone?

Capt. 'Slife, I thought to find company enough here.—My lord, your servant.—What a deuse, you look as if you had been up all night. I'm sure I was in bed but three hours; I would you'd give me some coffee.

Lady Ara. Some coffee there, tea too, and chocolate. [*Exit* TRUSTY.

Capt. [*Singing a minuet and dancing.*] Well, what a strange fellow am I to be thus brisk, after losing all my money last night!—But upon my soul you look sadly.

Lady Ara. No matter for that, if you'll let me win a little of your money this morning.

Capt. What, with that face? Go, go wash it, go wash it, and put on some handsome things; you looked a good likely woman last night; I would not much have cared if you had run five hundred pounds in my debt; but if I play with you this morning, egad I'd advise you to win, for I won't take your personal security at present for a guinea.

Lord Love. [*Aside.*] To what a nauseous freedom do women of quality of late admit these trifling fops? and there's a morning exercise will give 'em claim to greater freedoms still.—[*Points to the hazard-table.*] Some course must be taken. [*Exit.*

Capt. What, is my lord gone? He looked methought as if he did not delight much in my company. Well, peace and plenty attend him for your ladyship's sake, and those—who have now and then the honour to win a hundred pounds of you.

[*Goes to the table singing and throws.*

Lady Ara. [*Twitching the box from him.*] What, do you intend to win all the money upon the table?—Seven's the main—set me a million, Toupee.

Capt. I set you two, my queen—six to seven!

Lady Ara. Six.—The world's my own.

Both. Ha! ha! ha!

Lady Ara. Oh, that my lord had but spirit enough about him to let me play for a thousand pounds a night—but here comes country company.

Enter Lady HEADPIECE, Miss BETTY, Mrs. MOTHERLY, *and* Colonel COURTLY.

Your servant, madam, good morrow to you.

Lady Head. And to you, madam, we are come to breakfast with you. Lord, are you got to those pretty things already! [*Points to the dice.*

Lady Ara. You see we are not such idle folks in town as you country ladies take us to be; we are no sooner out of our beds, but we are at our work.

Miss Bet. Will dear lady Arabella give us leave, mother, to do a stitch or two with her?

[*Takes the box and throws.*

Capt. The pretty lively thing!

Lady Ara. With all her heart; what says your mama?

Lady Head. She says, she don't love to sit with her hands before her, when other people's are employed.

Capt. And this is the prettiest little sociable work, men and women can all do together at it.

Lady Head. Colonel, you are one with us, are you not?

Lady Ara. O, I'll answer for him, he'll be out at nothing.

Capt. In a facetious way; he is the politest person; he will lose his money to the ladies so civilly, and will win theirs with so much good breeding; and he will be so modest to 'em before company, and so impudent to 'em in a dark corner. Ha! colonel!

Lady Head. So I found him, I'm sure, last night.—Mercy on me, an ounce of virtue less than I had, and sir Francis had been undone.

Capt. Colonel, I smoke you.

Col. And a fine character you give the ladies of me, to help me.

Capt. I give 'em just the character of you they like, modest and brave.—Come ladies, to business; look to your money, every woman her hand upon her purse.

Miss Bet. Here's mine, captain.

Capt. Oh, the little soft velvet one!—and it's as full.—Come, lady Blowze, rattle your dice and away with 'em.

Lady Ara. Six—at all—five to six—five—eight—at all again—nine to eight—nine.

Enter Sir FRANCIS, *and stands gazing at them.*

Seven's the main—at all for ever! [*Throws out.*

Miss Bet. Now, mama, let's see what you can do.

[Lady HEADPIECE *takes the box.*

Lady Head. Well, I'll warrant you, daughter.

Miss Bet. If you do, I'll follow a good example.

Lady Head. Eight's the main—don't spare me, gentlemen, I fear you not—have at you all—seven to eight—seven.

Capt. Eight, lady, eight.—Five pounds if you please.

Lady Ara. Three, kinswoman.

Col. Two, madam.

Miss Bet. And one for miss, mama.—And now let's see what I can do.—[*Aside.*] If I should win enough this morning to buy me another new gown —O bless me! there they go!—Seven!—Come captain, set me boldly, I want to be at a handful.

Capt. There's two for you, miss.

Miss Bet. I'll at 'em, though I die for't.

Sir Fran. Ah my poor child, take care!

[*Runs to stop the throw.*

Miss Bet. There.

Capt. Out—twenty pounds, young lady.

Sir Fran. False dice, sir.

Capt. False dice, sir! I scorn your words.—Twenty pounds, madam.

Miss Bet. Undone! undone!

Sir Fran. She shan't pay you a farthing, sir; I won't have miss cheated.

Capt. Cheated, sir!

Lady Head. What do you mean, sir Francis, to disturb the company, and abuse the gentleman thus?

Sir Fran. I mean to be in a passion.

Lady Head. And why will you be in a passion, sir Francis?

Sir Fran. Because I came here to breakfast with my lady there, before I went down to the House, expecting to find my family set round a civil table with her, upon some plumcake, hot rolls, and a cup of strong beer; instead of which, I find these good women staying their stomachs with a box and dice, and that man there, with the strange periwig, making a good hearty meal upon my wife and daughter—

CÆTERA DESUNT.

THE

DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

GEORGE FARQUHAR.

LOVE AND A BOTTLE.

A Comedy.

Vade, sed incultus, qualem decet exulis esse.

Ovid. Trist. i. 1.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

PEREGRINE, LORD MARQUIS OF CARMARTHEN, &c.

My Lord,—Being equally a stranger to your Lordship, and the whole nobility of this kingdom, something of a natural impulse and aspiring motion in my inclinations has prompted me, though I hazard a presumption, to declare my respect. And be the success how it will, I am vain of nothing in this piece but the choice of my patron; I shall be so far thought a judicious author, whose principal business is to design his works an offering to the greatest honour and merit.

I cannot here, my Lord, stand accused of any sort of adulation but to myself, because compliments due to merit return upon the giver; and the only flattery is to myself, whilst I attempt your Lordship's praise. I dare make no essay on your Lordship's youthful bravery and courage, because such is always guarded with modesty, but shall venture to present you some lines on this subject, which the world will undoubtedly apply to your Lordship.

Courage the highest gift, that scorns to bend
To mean devices for a sordid end.
Courage—an independent spark from Heaven's bright throne,
By which the soul stands raised, triumphant, high, alone.
Great in itself, not praises of the crowd,
Above all vice, it stoops not to be proud.
Courage, the mighty attribute of powers above,
By which those great in war, are great in love.
The spring of all brave acts is seated here,
As falsehoods draw their sordid birth from fear.

The best and noblest part of mankind pay homage to royalty, what veneration then is due to those virtues and endowments which even engaged the respect of royalty itself, in the person of one of the greatest emperors in the world, who chose your Lordship not only as a companion, but a conductor!

He wanted the fire of such a Briton to animate his cold Russians, and would therefore choose you his leader in war, as in travel. He knew the fury of the Turk could be only stopped by an English nobleman, as the power of France was by an English king. A sense of this greatness which might deter others, animates me to address your lordship; resolved that my first muse should take a high and daring flight, I aspired to your Lordship's protection for this trifle, which I must own myself now proud of, affording me this opportunity of humbly declaring myself, my Lord, your Lordship's most devoted servant,

G. FARQUHAR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Roebuck, *an Irish Gentleman, of a wild roving temper; newly come to London.*
Lovewell, *his Friend, sober and modest, in love with* Lucinda.
Mockmode, *a young Squire, come newly from the University, and setting up for a Beau.*
Lyric, *a Poet.*
Pamphlet, *a Bookseller.*
Rigadoon, *a Dancing-Master.*
Nimblewrist, *a Fencing-Master.*
Club, *Servant to* Mockmode.
Brush, *Servant to* Lovewell.

Lucinda, *a Lady of considerable Fortune.*
Leanthe, *Sister to* Lovewell, *in love with* Roebuck, *and disguised as* Lucinda's *Page.*
Trudge, *Whore to* Roebuck.
Widow Bullfinch, *Landlady to* Mockmode, Lyric, *and* Trudge.
Pindress, *Attendant and Confidante to* Lucinda.

Bailiffs, Cripple, Porter, Boy, Masks, Dancers, *and* Attendants.

SCENE,—London.

PROLOGUE.

BY J. H. SPOKEN BY MR. POWELL,

A Servant attending with a Bottle of Wine.

As stubborn atheists, who disdain'd to pray,
Repent, though late, upon their dying day,
So in their pangs, most authors rack'd with fears,
Implore your mercy in our suppliant prayers.
But our new author has no cause maintain'd,
Let him not lose what he has never gain'd.
Love and a Bottle are his peaceful arms,
Ladies and gallants, have not these some charms?
For love, all mankind to the fair must sue.
And sirs, the bottle he presents to you.
Health to the play! [*Drinks*] e'en let it fairly pass;
Sure none sit here that will refuse their glass!
Oh, there's a damning soldier—let me think—
He looks as he were sworn—to what? to drink. [*Drinks.*
Come on then; foot to foot be boldly set,
And our young author's new commission wet.
He and his bottle here attend their doom,
From you the poet's Helicon must come;
If he has any foes, to make amends,
He gives his service: [*Drinks*] sure you now are friends.
No critic here will he provoke to fight,
The day be theirs, he only begs his night.
Pray pledge him now, secured from all abuse,
Then name the health you love, let none refuse,
But each man's mistress be the poet's muse.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.*

Enter ROEBUCK, *repeating the following line.*

Roe. *Thus far our arms have with success been crown'd.*—
Heroically spoken, faith, of a fellow that has not one farthing in his pocket! If I have one penny to buy a halter withal in my present necessity, may I be hanged! though I'm reduced to a fair way of obtaining one methodically very soon, if robbery or theft will purchase the gallows. But hold—can't I rob honourably, by turning soldier?

Enter Cripple *begging.*

Crip. One farthing to the poor old soldier, for the Lord's sake!

Roe. Ha!—a glimpse of damnation just as a man is entering into sin, is no great policy of the devil.—But how long did you bear arms, friend?

Crip. Five years, an't please you, sir.

Roe. And how long has that honourable crutch borne you?

Crip. Fifteen, sir.

Roe. Very pretty! five year a soldier, and fifteen a beggar!—This is hell right! an age of damnation, for a momentary offence. Thy condition, fellow, is preferable to mine; the merciful bullet, more kind than thy ungrateful country, has given thee a debenture in thy broken leg, from which thou canst draw a more plentiful maintenance than I from all my limbs in perfection. Prithee, friend, why wouldst thou beg of me? dost think I'm rich?

Crip. No, sir, and therefore I believe you charitable. Your warm fellows are so far above the sense of our misery, that they can't pity us; and I have always found it, by sad experience, as needless to beg of a rich man as a clergyman. Our greatest benefactors, the brave officers, are all disbanded, and must now turn beggars like myself; and so, times are very hard, sir.

Roe. What, are the soldiers more charitable than the clergy?

Crip. Ay, sir; a captain will say dam'me, and give me sixpence; and a parson shall whine out God bless me, and give me not a farthing: now I think the officer's blessing much the best.

Roe. Are the beaux never compassionate?

Crip. The great full wigs they wear stop their ears so close, that they can't hear us; and if they should, they never have any farthings about 'em.

Roe. Then I am a beau, friend; therefore pray leave me. Begging from a generous soul that has not to bestow, is more tormenting than robbery to a miser in his abundance. Prithee, friend, be thou charitable for once; I beg only the favour which rich friends bestow, a little advice. I am as poor as thou art, and am designing to turn soldier.

Crip. No, no, sir. See what an honourable post I am forced to stand to; my rags are scarecrows sufficient to frighten any one from the field; rather turn bird of prey at home. [*Showing his crutch.*

Roe. Grammercy, old devil! I find hell has its pimps of the poorer sort as well as of the wealthy. I fancy, friend, thou hast got a cloven foot instead of a broken leg.—'Tis a hard case that a man must never expect to go nearer heaven than some steps of a ladder. But 'tis unavoidable: I have my wants to lead, and the devil to drive; and if I can't meet my friend Lovewell (which I think impossible, being so great a stranger in town), Fortune, thou hast done thy worst; I proclaim open war against thee.

I'll stab thy next rich darling that I see;
And killing him, be thus revenged on thee.

[*Retires to the back part of the stage, as into the walks, making some turns across the stage in disorder.*—*Exit* Cripple.

Enter LUCINDA *and* PINDRESS.

Luc. Oh! these summer mornings are so delicately fine, Pindress, it does me good to be abroad!

Pin. Ay, madam, these summer mornings are as pleasant to young folks as the winter nights to

married people, or as your morning of beauty to Mr. Lovewell.

Luc. I'm violently afraid the evening of my beauty will fall to his share very soon; for I'm inclinable to marry him. I shall soon lie under an eclipse, Pindress.

Pin. Then it must be full moon with your ladyship. But why would you choose to marry in summer, madam?

Luc. I know no cause, but that people are aptest to run mad in hot weather, unless you take a woman's reason.

Pin. What's that, madam?

Luc. Why, I am weary of lying alone.

Pin. Oh, dear madam, lying alone is very dangerous! 'tis apt to breed strange dreams.

Luc. I had the oddest dream last night of my courtier that is to be, Squire Mockmode. He appeared crowded about with a dancing-master, pushing-master, music-master, and all the throng of beau-makers; and methought he mimicked foppery so awkwardly, that his imitation was downright burlesquing it. I burst out a-laughing so heartily, that I wakened myself!

Pin. But dreams go by contraries, madam. Have not you seen him yet?

Luc. No; but my uncle's letter gives account that he's newly come to town from the university, where his education could reach no farther than to guzzle fat ale, smoke tobacco, and chop logic.—Faugh! it makes me sick!

Pin. But he's very rich, madam; his concerns join to yours in the country.

Luc. Ay, but his concerns shall never join to mine in the city: for since I have the disposal of my own fortune, Lovewell's the man for my money.

Pin. Ay, and for my money: for I've had above twenty pieces from him since his courtship began. He's the prettiest sober gentleman! I have so strong an opinion of his modesty, that I'm afraid, madam, your first child will be a fool!

Luc. Oh, God forbid! I hope a lawyer understands business better than to beget anything *non compos.*—The walks fill apace; the enemy approaches, we must set out our false colours.

[*Put on their masks.*

Pin. We masks are the purest privateers!—Madam, how would you like to cruise about a little?

Luc. Well enough, had we no enemies but our fops and cits: but I dread these blustering men-of-war, the officers, who, after a broadside of damme's and sinkme's, are for boarding all masks they meet as lawful prize.

Pin. In truth, madam, and the most of 'em are lawful prize, for they generally have French ware under hatches.

Luc. Oh, hideous! o' my conscience, girl, thou'rt quite spoiled! An actress upon the stage would blush at such expressions.

Pin. Ay, madam, and your ladyship would seem to blush in the box, when the redness of your face proceeded from nothing but the constraint of holding your laughter. Did you chide me for not putting a stronger lace in your stays, when you had broke one as strong as a hempen cord with containing a violent tihee at a smutty jest in the last play?

Luc. Go, go, thou'rt a naughty girl! thy impertinent chat has diverted us from our business. I'm afraid Lovewell has missed us for want of the sign.—But whom have we here? An odd figure! some gentleman in disguise, I believe.

Pin. Had he a finer suit on, I should believe him in disguise; for I fancy his friends have only known him by that this twelvemonth.

Luc. His mien and air show him a gentleman, and his clothes demonstrate him a wit. He may afford us some sport. I have a female inclination to talk to him.

Pin. Hold, madam, he looks as like one of those dangerous men-of-war you just now mentioned as can be; you had best send out your pinnace before to discover the enemy.

Luc. No, I'll hail him myself.—[*Moves towards* ROEBUCK.] What, sir, dreaming?

[*Slaps him on the shoulder with her fan.*

Roe. Yes, madam. [*Sullenly.*

Luc. Of what?

Roe. Of the devil; and now my dream's out.

Luc. What, do you dream standing?

Roe. Yes faith, lady, very often when my sleep's haunted by such pretty goblins as you! You are a sort of dream I would fain be reading: I'm a very good interpreter indeed, madam.

Luc. Are you then one of the wise men of the East?

Roe. No, madam, but one of the fools of the West.

Luc. Pray, what do you mean by that?

Roe. An Irishman, madam, at your service.

Luc. Oh, horrible! an Irishman! a mere wolf-dog, I protest!

Roe. Ben't surprised, child; the wolf-dog is as well-natured an animal as any of your country bull-dogs, and a much more fawning creature, let me tell ye. [*Lays hold of her.*

Luc. Pray, good Cæsar, keep off your paws; no scraping acquaintance, for Heaven's sake! Tell us some news of your country; I have heard the strangest stories—that the people wear horns and hoofs!

Roe. Yes, 'faith, a great many wear horns: but we had that, among other laudable fashions, from London. I think it came over with your mode of wearing high topknots; for ever since, the men and wives bear their heads exalted alike. They were both fashions that took wonderfully.

Luc. Then you have ladies among you?

Roe. Yes, yes, we have ladies, and whores, colleges and playhouses, churches and taverns, fine houses and bawdy-houses: in short, everything that you can boast of, but fops, poets, toads, and adders.

Luc. But have you no beaux at all?

Roe. Yes; they come over like the woodcocks, once a year.

Luc. And have your ladies no springes to catch 'em in?

Roe. No, madam; our own country affords us much better wildfowl. But they are generally stripped of their feathers by the playhouse and taverns; in both which they pretend to be critics; and our ignorant nation imagines a full wig as infallible a token of a wit as the laurel.

Luc. Oh Lard! and here 'tis the certain sign of a blockhead. But why no poets in Ireland, sir?

Roe. Faith, madam, I know not, unless St. Patrick sent them a-packing with other venomous

creatures out of Ireland. Nothing that carries a sting in its tongue can live there. But since I have described my country, let me know a little of England, by a sight of your face.

Luc. Come you to particulars first. Pray, sir, unmask, by telling who you are; and then I'll unmask, and show who I am.

Roe. You must dismiss your attendant then, madam; for the distinguishing particular of me is a secret.

Pin. Sir, I can keep a secret as well as my mistress; and the greater the secrets are, I love 'em the better.

Luc. Can't they be whispered, sir?

Roe. Oh yes, madam, I can give you a hint, by which you may understand 'em.

[*Pretends to whisper, and kisses her.*

Luc. Sir, you're impudent!

Roe. Nay, madam, since you're so good at minding folks, have with you!

[*Catches her fast, carrying her off.*

Luc. Pin. Help! help! help!

Enter LOVEWELL, BRUSH *following.*

Love. Villain, unhand the lady, and defend thyself! [*Draws.*

Roe. What, knight-errants in this country!—Now has the devil very opportunely sent me a throat to cut; pray Heaven his pockets be well lined.—[*Quits* LUCINDA, *who goes off with* PINDRESS.] Have at thee! St. George for England!—[*They fight; after some passes,* ROEBUCK *starts back and pauses.*] My friend Lovewell!

Love. My dear Roebuck!—[*Fling down their swords, and embrace.*] Shall I believe my eyes?

Roe. You may believe your ears; 'tis I, by Gad!

Love. Why, thy being in London is such a mystery, that I must have the evidence of more senses than one to confirm me of its truth.—But pray unfold the riddle.

Roe. Why 'faith, 'tis a riddle. You wonder at it before the explanation, then wonder more at yourself for not guessing it.—What is the universal cause of the continued evils of mankind?

Love. The universal cause of our continued evil is the devil, sure!

Roe. No, 'tis the flesh, Ned.—That very woman that drove us all out of Paradise, has sent me a-packing out of Ireland.

Love. How so?

Roe. Only tasting the forbidden fruit, that was all.

Love. Is simple fornication become so great a crime there as to be punishable by no less than banishment?

Roe. Egad, mine was double fornication, Ned!—The jade was so pregnant to bear twins, the fruit grew in clusters; and my unconscionable father, because I was a rogue in debauching her, would make me a fool by wedding her. But I would not marry a whore, and he would not own a disobedient son, and so—

Love. But was she a gentlewoman?

Roe. Psha! no; she had no fortune. She wore indeed a silk manteau and high-head; but these are grown as little signs of gentility now-a-days as that is of chastity.

Love. But what necessity forced you to leave the kingdom?

Roe. I'll tell you.—To shun the insulting authority of an incensed father, the dull and often-repeated advice of impertinent relations, the continual clamours of a furious woman, and the shrill bawling of an ill-natured bastard. From all which, good Lord deliver me!

Love. And so you left them to grand-dadda?—Ha! ha! ha!

Roe. Heaven was pleased to lessen my affliction, by taking away the she brat; but the t'other is, I hope, well, because a brave boy, whom I christened Edward, after thee, Lovewell; I made bold to make my man stand for you, and your sister sent her maid to give her name to my daughter.

Love. Now you talk of my sister, pray how does she?

Roe. Dear Lovewell, a very miracle of beauty and goodness!—But I don't like her.

Love. Why?

Roe. She's virtuous;—and I think beauty and virtue are as ill joined as lewdness and ugliness.

Love. But I hope your arguments could not make her a proselyte to this profession?

Roe. Faith, I endeavoured it, but that plaguy honour—damn it for a whim!—Were it as honourable for women to be whores, as men to be whore-masters, we should have lewdness as great a mark of quality among the ladies, as 'tis now among the lords.

Love. What, do you hold no innate principle of virtue in women?

Roe. I hold an innate principle of love in them. Their passions are as great as ours, their reason weaker. We admire them, and consequently they must us. And I tell thee once more, that had women no safeguard but your innate principle of virtue, honest George Roebuck would have lain with your sister, Ned, and should enjoy a countess before night.

Love. But methinks, George, 'twas not fair to tempt my sister.

Roe. Methinks 'twas not fair of thy sister, Ned, to tempt me. As she was thy sister, I had no design upon her; but as she's a pretty woman, I could scarcely forbear her, were she my own.

Love. But, upon serious reflection, could not you have lived better at home by turning thy whore into a wife, than here by turning other men's wives into whores? There are merchants' ladies in London, and you must trade with them, for aught I see.

Roe. Ay, but is the trade open? is the manufacture encouraged, old boy?

Love. Oh, wonderfully!—a great many poor people live by't. Though the husbands are for engrossing the trade, the wives are altogether for encouraging interlopers. But I hope you have brought some small stock to set up with?

Roe. [*Aside.*] The greatness of my wants, which would force me to discover 'em, makes me blush to own 'em.—[*Aloud.*] Why faith, Ned, I had a great journey from Ireland hither, and would burden myself with no more than just necessary charges.

Love. Oh, then you have brought bills?

Roe. No, faith, exchange of money from Dublin hither, is so unreasonable high, that—

Love. What?

Roe. That—Zoons, I have not one farthing!—Now you understand me.

Love. No faith, I never understand one that

comes *in forma pauperis*; I han't studied the law so long for nothing.—But what prospect can you propose of a supply?

Roe. I'll tell you. When you appeared, I was just thanking my stars for sending me a throat to cut, and consequently a purse: but my knowledge of you prevented me of that way, and therefore I think you're obliged in return to assist me by some better means. You were once an honest fellow; but so long study in the inns may alter a man strangely, as you say.

Love. No, dear Roebuck, I'm still a friend to thy virtues, and esteem thy follies as foils only to set them off. I did but rally you; and to convince you, here are some pieces, share of what I have about me: take them as earnest of my farther supply. You know my estate sufficient to maintain us both, if you will either restrain your extravagancies, or I retrench my necessaries.

Roe. Thy profession of kindness is so great, that I could almost suspect it of design. But come, friend, I am heartily tired with the fatigue of my journey, besides a violent fit of sickness, which detained me a month at Coventry, to the exhausting my health and money. Let me only recruit by a relish of the town in love and a bottle, and then—O heavens! and earth!

[*As they are going off,* ROEBUCK *starts back surprised.*

Love. What's the matter, man?

Roe. Why, death and the devil! or, what's worse, a woman and a child.—Oons! don't you see Mrs. Trudge with my bastard in her arms crossing the field towards us?—Oh, the indefatigable whore, to follow me all the way to London!

Love. Mrs. Trudge! my old acquaintance?

Roe. Ay, ay, the very same; your old acquaintance; and for aught I know, you might have clubbed about getting the brats.

Love. 'Tis but reasonable then I should pay share at the reckoning. I'll help to provide for her; in the mean time, you had best retire.—Brush, conduct this gentleman to my lodgings, and run from thence to widow Bullfinch's, and provide a lodging with her for a friend of mine.—Fly! and come back presently.—[*Exeunt* ROEBUCK *and* BRUSH.] So, my friend comes to town like the great Turk to the field, attended by his concubines and children; and I'm afraid these are but parts of his retinue.—But hold—I shan't be able to sustain the shock of this woman's fury. I'll withdraw till she has discharged her first volley, then surprise her. [*Retires behind.*

Enter TRUDGE, *with a child crying.*

Trudge. Hush, hush, hush!—And indeed it was a young traveller!—And what would it say? It says that daddy is a false man, a cruel man, and an ungrateful man.—In troth so he is, my dear child.—What shall I do with it, poor creature?—Hush, hush, hush!—Was ever poor woman in such a lamentable condition? immediately after the pains of one travail, to undergo the fatigues of another!—But I'm sure he can never do well; for though I can't find him, my curses, and the misery of this babe, will certainly reach him.

Love. [*Coming forward.*] Methinks I should know that voice.—What, Mrs. Trudge! and in London! Whose brave boy hast thou got there?

Trudge. Oh Lord! Mr. Lovewell! I'm very glad to see you,—and yet am ashamed to see you. But indeed he promised to marry me, [*Crying*] and you know, Mr. Lovewell, that he's such a handsome man, and has so many ways of insinuating, that the frailty of woman's nature could not resist him.

Love. What's all this?—a handsome man! ways of insinuating! frailty of nature!—I don't understand these ambiguous terms.

Trudge. Ah, Mr. Lovewell! I'm sure you have seen Mr. Roebuck, and I'm sure 'twould be the first thing he would tell you. I refer it to you, Mr. Lovewell, if he is not an ungrateful man, to deal so barbarously with any woman that had used him so civilly. I was kinder to him than I would have been to my own born brother.

Love. Oh, then I find kissing goes by favour, Mrs. Trudge.

Trudge. Faith, you're all alike, you men are alike.—Poor child! he's as like his own dadda as if he were spit out of his mouth. See, Mr. Lovewell, if he has not Mr. Roebuck's nose to a hair; and you know he has a very good nose; and the little pigsny has mamma's mouth.—Oh, the little lips! and 'tis the best-natured little dear!—[*Smuggles and kisses it.*] And would it ask its godfather blessing?—Indeed, Mr. Lovewell, I believe the child knows you.

Love. Ha! ha! ha! well, I will give it my blessing. [*Gives it gold.*

Re-enter LUCINDA *and* PINDRESS, *who seeing the others instantly abscond.*

Come, madam, I'll first settle you in a lodging, and then find the false man, as you call him.

[*Exit with* TRUDGE.

Luc. [*Coming forward.*] The false man is found already!—Was there ever such a lucky discovery?—My care for his preservation brought me back, and now behold how my kindness is returned!—Their fighting was a downright trick to frighten me from the place, thereby to afford him opportunity of entertaining his whore and brat.

Pin. Your conjecture, madam, bears a colour; for looking back, I could perceive 'em talking very familiarly; so that they could not be strangers as their pretended quarrel would intimate.

Luc. 'Tis all true as he is false.—What, slighted! despised! my honourable love trucked for a whore! O villain! epitome of thy sex!—But I'll be revenged. I'll marry the first man that asks me the question; nay, though he be a disbanded soldier, or a poor poet, or a senseless fop;—nay, though impotent, I'll marry him.

Pin. O madam! that's to be revenged on yourself.

Luc. I care not, fool! I deserve punishment for my credulity, as much as he for his falsehood.—And you deserve it too, minx; your persuasions drew me to this assignation: I never loved the false man.

Pin. That's false, I'm sure. [*Aside.*

Luc. But you thought to get another piece of gold. We shall have him giving you money on the same score he was so liberal to his whore just now.

[*Walks about in a passion.*

Re-enter LOVEWELL, BRUSH *following.*

Love. So much for friendship, now for my love.—I han't transgressed much.—Oh, there she is.—O my angel! [*Runs to* LUCINDA.

Luc. O thou devil! [*Starts back.*

Love. Not unless you damn me, madam.

Luc. You're damned already; you're a man. [*Exit pushing* PINDRESS.

Love. You're a woman, I'll be sworn.—Heyday! what giddy female planet rules now! By the Lord, these women are like their maidenheads, no sooner found than lost!—Here, Brush, run after Pindress, and know the occasion of this.—Stay, come back. —Zoons, I'm a fool!

Brush. That's the first wise word you have spoken these two months.

Love. Trouble me with your untimely jests, sirrah, and I'll—

Brush. Your pardon, sir; I'm in downright earnest.—[*Aside.*] 'Tis less slavery to be apprentice to a famous clap-surgeon, than to a lover. He falls out with me, because he can't fall in with his mistress. I can bear it no longer.

Love. Sirrah, what are you mumbling?

Brush. A short prayer before I depart, sir.—I have been these three years your servant, but now, sir, I'm your humble servant. [*Bows as going.*

Love. Hold! you shan't leave me.

Brush. Sir, you can't be my master.

Love. Why so?

Brush. Because you're not your own master; yet one would think you might, for you have lost your mistress. Oons, sir, let her go, and a fair riddance! Who throws away a tester and a mistress, loses sixpence. That little pimping Cupid is a blind gunner. Had he shot as many darts as I have carried billets-doux, he would have laid her kicking with her heels up ere now. In short, sir, my patience is worn to the stumps with attending; my shoes and stockings are upon their last legs with trudging between you. I have sweat out all my moisture of my hand with palming your clammy letters upon her. I have—

Love. Hold, sir, your trouble is now at an end, for I design to marry her.

Brush. And have you courted her these three years for nothing but a wife?

Love. Do you think, rascal, I would have taken so much pains to make her a miss?

Brush. No, sir; the tenth part on't would ha' done.—But if you are resolved to marry, God b'w'ye!

Love. What's the matter now, sirrah!

Brush. Why, the matter will be, that I must then pimp for her.—Hark ye, sir, what have you been doing all this while, but teaching her the way to cuckold ye?—Take care, sir; look before you leap. You have a ticklish point to manage. —Can you tell, sir, what's her quarrel to you now?

Love. I can't imagine. I don't remember that ever I offended her.

Brush. That's it, sir. She resolves to put your easiness to the test now, that she may with more security rely upon't hereafter.—Always suspect those women of designs that are for searching into the humours of their courtiers; for they certainly intend to try them when they're married.

Love. How camest thou such an engineer in love?

Brush. I have sprung some mines in my time, sir; and since I have trudged so long about your amorous messages, I have more intrigue in the sole of my feet, than some blockheads in their whole body.

Love. Sirrah, have you ever discovered any behaviour in this lady to occasion this suspicious discourse?

Brush. Sir, has this lady ever discovered any behaviour of yours to occasion this suspicious quarrel? I believe the lady has as much of the innate principle of virtue (as the gentleman said) as any woman; but that baggage, her attendant, is about ravishing her lady's page every hour. 'Tis an old saying, Like master, like man; why not as well, Like mistress, like maid?

Love. [*Aside.*] Since thou art for trying humours, have with you, madam Lucinda! Besides, so fair an opportunity offers, that fate seemed to design it.—[*Aloud.*] Have you left the gentleman at my lodgings?

Brush. Yes, sir, and sent a porter to his inn to bring his things thither.

Love. That's right.—Love, like other diseases, must sometimes have a desperate cure. The school of Venus imposes the strict discipline;
And awful Cupid is a chastening god;
He whips severely.

Brush. No, not if we kiss the rod. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—LOVEWELL'S *Lodgings.*

Enter LOVEWELL, ROEBUCK, *and* BRUSH.

Love. O' my conscience, the fawning creature loves you.

Roe. Ay, the constant effects of debauching a woman are, that she infallibly loves the man for doing the business, and he certainly hates her.—But what company is she like to have at this same widow's, Brush?

Brush. Oh, the best of company, sir! a poet lives there, sir.

Roe. They're the worst company, for they're ill-natured.

Brush. Ay, sir, but it does nobody any harm; for these fellows that get bread by their wits are always forced to eat their words. They must be good-natured, spite of their teeth, sir. 'Tis said he pays his lodging by cracking some smutty jests with his landlady over night; for she's very well pleased with his natural parts.

[*While* ROEBUCK *and* BRUSH *converse together,* LOVEWELL *seems to project something by himself.*

Roe. What other lodgers are there?

Brush. One newly entered, a young squire, just come from the university.

Roe. A mere peripatetic, I warrant him.—A very pretty family! a heathen philosopher, an English poet, and an Irish whore! Had the landlady but a Highland piper to join with 'em, she might set up for a collection of monsters.—Anybody within? [*Slaps* LOVEWELL *on the shoulder.*

Love. Yes, you are my friend; all my thoughts were employed about you. In short, I have one

request to make,—that you would renounce your loose wild courses, and lead a sober life, as I do.

Roe. That I will, if you'll grant me a boon.

Love. You shall have it, be't what it will.

Roe. That you would relinquish your precise sober behaviour, and live like a gentleman, as I do.

Roe. That I can't grant.

Roe. Then we're off: though should your women prove no better than your wine, my debaucheries will fall of themselves for want of temptation.

Love. Our women are worse than our wine; our claret has but little of the French in't, but our wenches have the devil and all. They are both adulterated; to prevent the inconveniences of which, I'll provide you an honourable mistress.

Roe. An honourable mistress! what's that?

Love. A virtuous lady, whom you must love and court; the surest method of reclaiming you.—As thus: those superfluous pieces you throw away in wine may be laid out—

Roe. To the poor?

Love. No, no; in sweet-powder, cravats, garters, snuffboxes, ribbons, coach-hire, and chair-hire. Those idle hours which you misspend with lewd sophisticated wenches, must be dedicated—

Roe. To the church?

Love. No; to the innocent and charming conversation of your virtuous mistress; by which means the two most exorbitant debaucheries, drinking and whoring, will be retrenched.

Roe. A very fine retrenchment truly! I must first despise the honest jolly conversation at the tavern, for the foppish, affected, dull, insipid entertainment at the chocolate-house; must quit my freedom with ingenious company to harness myself to foppery among the fluttering crowd of Cupid's livery-boys!—The second article is, that I must resign the company of lewd women for that of my innocent mistress; that is, I must change my easy natural sin of wenching, to that constrained debauchery of lying and swearing.—The many lies and oaths that I made to thy sister, will go nearer to damn me, than if I had enjoyed her a hundred times over.

Love. O Roebuck! your reason will maintain the contrary when you're in love.

Roe. That is, when I have lost my reason.—Come, come, a wench, a wench! a soft, white, easy, consenting creature!—Prithee, Ned, leave mustiness, and show me the varieties of the town.

Love. A wench is the least variety.—Look out—see what a numerous train trip along the street there! [*Pointing outwards.*

Roe. O Venus! all these fine stately creatures! Fare you well, Ned!—[*Runs out;* LOVEWELL *catches him and pulls him back.*] Prithee let me go; 'tis a deed of charity; I'm quite starved. I'll just take a snap, and be with you in the twinkling.—As you're my friend—I must go.

Love. Then we must break for all together.—[*Quits him.*] He that will leave his friend for a whore, I reckon a commoner in friendship as in love.

Roe. If you saw how ill that serious face becomes a fellow of your years, you would never wear it again. Youth is taking in any masquerade but gravity.

Love. Though lewdness suits much worse with your circumstances, sir.

Roe. [*Aside.*] Ay, these circumstances! damn these circumstances! There he has hamstringed me. This poverty! how it makes a man sneak!—[*Aloud.*] Well, prithee let's know this devilish virtuous lady. By the circumstances of my body, I shall soon be off or on with her.

Love. Know then, for thy utter condemnation, that she's a lady of eighteen, beautiful, witty, and nicely virtuous.

Roe. A lady of eighteen! good.—Beautiful! better.—Witty! best of all.—Now with these three qualifications, if she be nicely virtuous, then I'll henceforth adore everything that wears a petticoat.—Witty and virtuous! ha! ha! ha! Why, 'tis as inconsistent in ladies as gentlemen; and were I to debauch one for a wager, her wit should be my bawd.—Come, come, the forbidden fruit was plucked from the tree of knowledge, boy.

Love. Right.—But there was a cunninger devil than you, to tempt. I'll assure you, George, your rhetoric would fail you here; she should worst you at your own weapons.

Roe. Ay, or any man in England, if she be eighteen, as you say.

Love. Have a care, friend; this satire will get you torn in pieces by the females; you'll fall into Orpheus's fate.

Roe. Orpheus was a blockhead, and deserved his fate.

Love. Why?

Roe. Because he went to hell for a wife.

Love. [*Aside.*] This happens right.—[*Aloud.*] But you shall go to heaven for a mistress, you shall court this divine creature.—I don't desire you to fall in love with her; I don't intend you should marry her neither: but you must be convinced of the chastity of the sex; though if you should conquer her, the spoil, you rogue, will be glorious, and infinitely worth the pains in attaining.

Roe. Ay, but Ned, my circumstances, my circumstances!

Love. Come, you shan't want money.

Roe. Then I dare attempt it. Money is the sinews of love, as of war. Gad, friend, thou'rt the bravest pimp I every heard of.—Well, give me directions to sail by, the name of my port, lade my pockets, and then for the Cape of Good Hope.

Love. You need no directions as to the manner of courtship.

Roe. No; I have seen some few principles on which my courtship's founded, which seldom fail. To let a lady rely upon my modesty, but to depend myself altogether upon my impudence; to use a mistress like a deity in public, but like a woman in private: to be as cautious then of asking an impertinent question, as afterwards of telling a story; remembering, that the tongue is the only member that can hurt a lady's honour, though touched in the tenderest part.

Love. Oh! but to a friend, George, you'll tell a friend your success?

Roe. No, not to her very self; it must be as private as devotion.—No blabbing unless a squalling brat peeps out to tell tales.—But where lies my course?

Love. Brush shall show you the house; the lady's name is Lucinda; her father and mother dead; she's heiress to twelve hundred a year. But above all, observe this: she has a page which you must get on your side; 'tis a very pretty boy; I

presented him to the lady about a fortnight ago; he's your countryman too; he brought me a letter from my sister, which I have about me.—Here, you may read it.

Roe. [*Aside.*] Ay, 'tis her hand; I know it well; and I almost blush to see it.— [*Reads.*

Dear brother,

A lady of my acquaintance lately dying, begged me as her last request, to provide for this boy, who was her page. I hope I have obeyed my friend's last command, and obliged a brother, by sending him to you. Pray dispose of him as much as you can for his advantage. All friends are well, and I am your affectionate sister,

LEANTHE.

[*While he reads,* LOVEWELL *converses in dumb show with* BRUSH.

All friends are well!—Is that all? not a word of poor Roebuck.—I wonder she mentioned nothing of my misfortunes to her brother. But she has forgot me already. True woman still!—Well, I may excuse her, for I'm making all the haste I can to forget her.

Love. [*Aside to* BRUSH.] Be sure you have an eye upon him, and come to me presently at widow Bullfinch's.—Well, George, you won't communicate your success?

Roe. You may guess what you please.—I'm as merry after a mistress as after a bottle.—All air; brimful of joy, like a bumper of claret, smiling and sparkling.

Love. Then you'll certainly run over.

Roe. No, no, nor shall I drink to anybody. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Widow BULLFINCH'S *House; a flute and music-book upon the table; a case of toys hanging up.*

Enter RIGADOON, *leading in* MOCKMODE *by both hands; he sings and* MOCKMODE *dances awkwardly;* CLUB *follows.*

Rig. Tal—dal—deral!—one—two.—Tal—dal—deral!—coupé.—Tal—dal—deral!—very well!—Tal—dal—deral!—wrong!—Tal—dal—deral!—toes out!—Tal—dal—deral!—observe time!—Very well indeed, sir; you shall dance as well as any man in England; you have an excellent disposition in your limbs, sir.—Observe me, sir.—[*Dances a new minuet; at every cut* CLUB *makes an awkward imitation by leaping up.*] And so forth, sir.

Mock. I'm afraid we shall disturb my landlady.

Rig. Landlady! you must have a care of that; she'll never pardon you.—Landlady!—every woman, from a countess to a kitchen wench, is madam; and every man, from a lord to a lackey, sir.

Mock. Must I then lose my title of squire, squire Mockmode?

Rig. By all means, sir; squire and fool are the same thing here.

Mock. That's very comical, faith!—But is there an act of parliament for that, Mr. Rigadoon?—Well, since I can't be a squire, I'll do as well; I have a great estate, and want only to be a great beau to qualify me either for a knight or a lord. By the universe, I have a great mind to bind myself 'prentice to a beau!—Could I but dance well, push well, play upon the flute, and swear the most modish oaths, I would set up for quality with e'er a young nobleman of 'em all—Pray what are the most fashionable oaths in town? Zoons, I take it, is a very becoming one.

Rig. Zoons is only used by the disbanded officers and bullies: but zauns is the beaux' pronunciation.

Mock. Zauns!

Club. Zauns.

Rig. Yes, sir, we swear as we dance; smooth, and with a cadence.—Zauns!—'Tis harmonious, and pleases the ladies, because 'tis soft.—Zauns, madam!—is the only compliment our great beaux pass on a lady.

Mock. But suppose a lady speaks to me, what must I say?

Rig. Nothing, sir:—you must take snush, grin, and make her an humble cringe—thus:—[*Bows foppishly, and takes snush;* MOCKMODE *imitates him awkwardly, and taking snush, sneezes.*] O Lard, sir! you must never sneeze; 'tis as unbecoming after orangery as grace after meat.

Mock. I thought people took it to clear the brain.

Rig. The beaux have no brains at all, sir; their skull is a perfect snush-box; and I heard a physician swear, who opened one of 'em, that the three divisions of his head were filled with orangery, bergamot, and plain Spanish.

Mock. Zauns, I must sneeze!—[*Sneezes.*] Bless me!

Rig. O fy, Mr. Mockmode! what a rustical expression that is!—Bless me!—You should upon all such occasions cry, Dem me! You would be as nauseous to the ladies as one of the old patriarchs, if you used that obsolete expression.

Club. [*Aside.*] I find that going to the devil is very modish in this town.—[*Aloud.*] Pray, master dancing-master, what religion may these beaux be of?

Rig. A sort of Indians in their religion, they worship the first thing they see in the morning.

Mock. What's that, sir?

Rig. Their own shadows in the glass; and some of 'em such hellish faces, that may frighten 'em into devotion.

Mock. Then they are Indians right, for they worship the devil.

Rig. Then you shall be as great a beau as any of 'em. But you must be sure to mind your dancing.

Mock. Is not music very convenient too?—I can play the Bells and Maiden Fair already.—Alamire! Bifabemi! Cesolfa! Delasol! Ela! Effaut! Gesolreut!—I have 'em all by heart already. But I have been plaguily puzzled about the etymology of these notes; and certainly a man cannot arrive at any perfection, unless he understands the derivation of the terms.

Rig. O Lard, sir! that's easy. Effaut and Gesolreut were two famous German musicians, and the rest were Italians.

Mock. But why are they only seven?

Rig. From a prodigious great bass-viol with seven strings, that played a jig called the Music of the Spheres. The seven planets were nothing but fiddle-strings.

Mock. Then your stars have made you a dancing-master?

Rig. O Lard, sir! Pythagoras was a dancing-master; he shows the creation to be a country-dance, where after some antic changes, all the parts fell into their places, and there they stand ready, till the next squeak of a philosopher's fiddle sets 'em a dancing again.

Club. Sir, here comes the pushing-master.

Rig. Then I'll be gone. But you must have a care of pushing, 'twill spoil the niceness of your steps. Learn a flourish or two; and that's all a beau can have occasion for. [*Exit.*

Enter NIMBLEWRIST.

Mock. Oh, Mr. Nimblewrist, I crave you ten thousand pardons, by the universe!

Nimb. That was a home thrust!—Good sir, I hope you're for a breathing this morning?—[*Takes down a foil.*] I'll assure you, Mr. Mockmode, you will make an excellent swordsman; you're as well shaped for fencing as any man in Europe. The duke of Burgundy is just of your make; he pushes the finest of any man in France.—Sa! sa!—like lightning.

Mock. I'm much in love with fencing: but I think, backsword is the best play.

Nimb. Oh Lard, sir!—Have you ever been in France, sir?

Mock. No, sir; but I understand the geography of it—France is bounded on the north with the Rhine—

Nimb. No, sir; a Frenchman is bounded on the north with quart, on the south with tierce—and so forth. 'Tis a noble art, sir; and every one that wears a sword is obliged by his tenure to learn. The rules of honour are engraved on my hilt, and my blade must maintain 'em. My sword's my herald, and the bloody hand my coat of arms.

Mock. And how long have you professed this noble art, sir?

Nimb. Truly, sir, I served an apprenticeship to this trade, sir.

Mock. What, are ye a corporation then?

Nimb. Yes, sir! the surgeons have taken us into theirs, because we make so much work for 'em.—But, as I was telling you, sir, I professed this science till the wars broke out: but then, when everybody got commissions, I put in for one, served the campaigns in Flanders; and when the peace broke out, was disbanded; so among a great many other poor rogues, am forced to betake to my old trade. Now the public quarrel's ended, I live by private ones. I live still by dying, as the song goes, sir. While we have English courages, French honour, and Spanish blades among us, I shall live, sir.

Mock. Surely your sword and skill did the king great service abroad?

Nimb. Yes, sir; I killed above fifteen of our own officers by private duels in the camp, sir; killed 'em fairly; killed 'em thus, sir.—Sa! sa! sa! sa! Parry! parry! parry!—

[*Pushes* MOCKMODE *on the ribs; he strikes* NIMBLEWRIST *over the head, and breaks the foil.*

Club. What's the name of that thrust, pray, sir?

Nimb. Oh Lard, sir! he did not touch me not in the least, sir; the foil was cracked, a palpable crack! [*Blood runs down his face.*

Club. A very palpable crack, truly! Your skull is only cracked, palpably cracked, that's all.

Mock. Well, sir, if you please to teach me my honours.—My dancing-master has forbid me any more, lest I should discompose my steps.

Nimb. Your dancing-master is a blockhead, sir.

Re-enter RIGADOON.

Rig. I forgot my gloves, and so—

Mock. O sir, he calls you blockhead, by the universe!

Rig. Zauns, sir! [*Foppishly.*

Nimb. Zoons, sir! [*Bluffishly.*

Rig. I have more wit in the sole of my foot, than you have in your whole body.

Nimb. Ay, sir; you caperers dance all your brains into your heels, which makes you carry such empty noddles. Your rational's reversed, carrying your understandings in your legs. Your wit is the perfect antipodes to other men's.

Rig. And what are you, good monsieur Sa, sa?—Stand upon your guard, Mr. Mockmode, he's the greatest falsifier in his art: he'll fill your head so full of French principles of honour, that you won't have one of honesty left. His breastplate there he calls the but of honour, at which all the fools in the kingdom shoot, and not one can hit the mark.

Nimb. You talk of Robin Hood, who never shot in his bow, sir.—You dancers are the battledores of the nation, that toss the light foppish shuttle-cocks to and again, to get yourselves in heat.—Have a care, Mr. Mockmode; this fellow will make a mere grasshopper of you.—Sir, you're the grand pimp to foppery and lewdness; and the devil and a dancing-master dance a coranto over the whole kingdom.

Rig. A pimp, sir! what then, sir? I engage couples into the bed of love, but you match 'em in the bed of honour. We only juggle people out of their chastity, but you cheat 'em out of their lives.—We shall have you, Mr. Mockmode, grinning in the bed of honour, as if you laughed at the fool who must be hanged for you.—Which is best, Mr. Nimblewrist, an easy minuet, or a Tyburn jig?

Nimb. Don't provoke my sword, sir, lest that art you so revile should revenge itself; for every one of you that live by dancing should die by pushing, sir.

Rig. And every man that lives by pushing, should die dancing, I take it.

Nimb. Zoons, sir! what d'ye mean?

Rig. Nothing, sir; — tal — dal — deral! — [*Dances.*] This takes the ladies, Mr. Mockmode; this runs away with all the great fortunes in town. Though you be a fool, a fop, a coward, dance well, and you captivate the ladies. The moving a man's limbs pliantly does the business. If you want a fortune, come to me.—Tal—dal—deral! [*Dances.*

Nimb. No, no, to me, sir.—Sa! sa!—does your business soonest with a woman. A clean and manly extension of all your parts.—Ha!—carrying a true point is the matter.—Sa! sa! sa! sa! Defend yourself.

[*Pushes at* RIGADOON, *who dances and sings, retiring off the stage.*

Enter Widow BULLFINCH.

Bull. Oh goodness! what a room's here! Could not these fellows wipe their feet before they came up? And here's such a tripping and such a stamping, that they have broke down all the ceiling.—You dancing and fencing-masters have been the downfall of many houses. Get out of

my doors! my house was never in such a pickle.—You country gentlemen, newly come to London, like your own spaniels out of a pond, must be shaking the water off, and, bespatter everybody about you.—

[MOCKMODE *having taken snush, offering to sneeze, sneezes in her face.*

Mock. Zauns, madam!—[*Sneezes.*] Bless me! Dem me! I mean.

Bull. He's tainted. These cursed flies have blown upon him already. [*Aside.*

Mock. Sa! sa!—defend flankonade, madam.

Bull. Ah, Mr. Mockmode, my pushing and dancing days are done! But I had a son, Mr. Mockmode, that would match you.—Ah, my poor Robin!—He died of an apoplexy; he was as pretty a young man as ever stepped in a black-leather shoe. He was as like you, Mr. Mockmode, as one egg is like another; he died like an angel. But I am sure he might have recovered but for the physicians.—Oh, these doctors! these doctors!

Mock. Bless the doctors! I say; for I believe they killed my honest old father.

Bull. Ay, that's true. If my Robin had left me an estate, I should have said so too. [*Cries.*

Mock. Zauns, madam, you must not be melancholy, madam!

Bull. Well, sir, I hope you'll give us the beverage of your fine clothes. I'll assure you, sir, they fit you very well, and I like your fancy mightily.

Mock. Ay, ay, madam. But what's most modish for beverage? for, I suppose, the fashion of that alters always with the clothes.

Bull. The tailors are the best judges of that:—but champagne, I suppose.

Mock. Is champagne a tailor? Now, methinks, that were a fitter name for a wig-maker.—I think they call my wig a campaign.

Bull. You're clear out, sir, clear out! champagne is a fine liquor, which all your great beaux drink to make 'em witty.

Mock. Witty! oh, by the universe, I must be witty! I'll drink nothing else; I never was witty in all my life. I love jokes dearly.—Here, Club, bring us a bottle of what d'ye call it; the witty liquor. [*Exit* CLUB.

Bull. But I thought all you that were bred at the university should be wits naturally?

Mock. The quite contrary, madam, there's no such thing there. We dare not have wit there, for fear of being counted rakes. Your solid philosophy is all read there, which is clear another thing. But now I will be a wit, by the universe! I must get acquainted with the great poets: landlady, you must introduce me.

Bull. Oh, dear me, sir! would you ruin me? I introduce you! no widow dare be seen with a poet, for fear she should be thought to keep him.

Mock. Keep him! what's that? They keep nothing but sheep in the country; I hope they don't fleece the wits?

Bull. Alas, sir, they have no fleeces! there's a great cry, but little wool. However, if you would be acquainted with the poets, I can prevail with a gentleman of my acquaintance to introduce you. 'Tis one Lovewell, a fine gentleman that comes here sometimes.

Mock. Lovewell! by the universe, my rival! I heard of him in the country. This puts me in mind of my mistress.—Zauns! I'm certainly become a beau already; for I was so in love with myself, I quite forgot her.—I have a note in my pocket-book to find her out by.—[*Pulls out a large pocket-book; turning over the leaves, reads to himself.*] *Sixpence for washing.—Twopence to the maid.—Sixpence for snush.—One shilling for buttered ale.*—By the universe, I have lost the directions!—Hark ye, madam; does this same Lovewell come often here, say you?

Bull. Yes, sir, very often. There's a lady of his acquaintance, a lodger in the house just now.

Mock. A lady of his acquaintance, a lodger in the house just now! of his acquaintance, do you say?

Bull. Yes, and a pretty lady too.

Mock. And he comes often here, you say?—By the universe, should I happen to lodge in the same house with my mistress! Egad, it must be the same!—Can you tell the woman's name?—Stay—is her name Lucinda?

Bull. Perhaps it may, sir; but I believe she's a widow, for she has a young son, and I'm sure 'tis legitimately begotten; for 'tis the bravest child you shall see in a summer's day. 'Tis not like one of our puling brats o'th' town here, born with the diseases of half-a-dozen fathers about it.

Mock. By the universe, I don't remember whether my mistress is maid or widow! But a widow, so much the better; for all your London widows are devilish rich, they say. She came in a coach, did she not, madam?

Bull. Yes, sir, yes.

Mock. Then, 'tis infallibly she.—Does she not always go out in her coach?

Bull. She has not stirred abroad since she came, sir.

Mock. Oh, I was told she was very reserved, though 'tis very much of a widow. I have often heard my mother say, that sitting at home, and silence, were very becoming in a maid; and she has often chid my sister Dorothy for gadding out to the meadows, and tumbling among the cocks with the haymakers. Egad, I am the most lucky son of a whore! I was wrapped in the tail of my mother's smock, landlady.

Enter Servant.

Bull. Oh, but this lady, sir—

Serv. Madam, here's a gentleman below wants to speak with you instantly.

Bull. With me, child!—Sir, I'll wait on you in a minute. [*Exit with* Servant.

Re-enter CLUB, *with wine and glasses.*

Mock. Is that the witty liquor? Come, fill the glasses. Now that I have found my mistress, I must next find my wits.

Club. So you had need, master; for those that find a mistress are generally out of their wits. [*Gives him a glass.*

Mock. Come, fill for yourself.—[*They jingle and drink.*] But where's the wit now, Club? have you found it?

Club. Egad, master, I think 'tis a very good jest.

Mock. What?

Club. What! why, drinking. You'll find, master, that this same gentleman in the straw-doublet, this same will i'th' wisp is a wit at the bottom.—[*Fills.*] Here, here, master; how it puns and quibbles in the glass!

Mock. By the universe, now I have it!—the

wit lies in the jingling. All wit consists most in jingling, hear how the glasses rhyme to one another.

Club. What, master, are these wits so apt to clash? [*Jingle the glasses.*

Mock. Oh, by the universe, by the universe, this is wit!—[*Breaks them.*] My landlady is in the right.—I have often heard there was wit in breaking glasses. It would be a very good joke to break the flask now.

Club. I find, then, that this same wit is very brittle ware. But I think, sir, 'twere no joke to spill the wine.

Mock. Why, there's the jest, sirrah; all wit consists in losing; there was never anything got by't. I fancy this same wine is all sold at Will's Coffee-house. Do you know the way thither, sirrah? I long to see Mr. Comic and Mr. Tagrhyme, with the rest of 'em. I wonder how they look! Certainly these poets must have something extraordinary in their faces. Of all the rarities of the town, I long to see nothing more than the poets and Bedlam.—Come in, Club; I must go practise my honours.—Tal—dal—deral!—

[*Exit dancing, and* CLUB *toping.*

SCENE III.—*Another Room in the same.*

Enter LOVEWELL *and* Widow BULLFINCH.

Bull. Oh, Mr. Lovewell, you come just in the nick! I was ready to spoil all, by telling him that she was a stranger, and just now come.

Love. Well, dear madam, be cautious for the future; 'tis the most fortunate chance that ever befel me. 'Twere convenient we had the other lodgers of our side.

Bull. There's nobody but Mr. Lyric; and you had as safely tell a secret over a groaning-cheese as to him.

Love. How so?

Bull. Why, you must know, that he has been lying-in these four months of a play; and he has got all the Muses about him; a parcel of the most tattling gossips.

Love. Come, come; no more words; but to our business. I will certainly reward you. But have you any good hopes of its succeeding?

Bull. Very well of the squire's side. But I'm afraid your widow will never play her part, she's so awkward, and so sullen.

Love. Go you and instruct her, while I manage affairs abroad.

Bull. She's always raving of one Roebuck. Prithee, who is this same Roebuck?—Ah, Mr. Lovewell, I'm afraid this widow of yours is something else at the bottom; I'm afraid there has been a dog in the well! [*Exit.*

Enter BRUSH.

Love. So, sirrah! where have you left the gentleman?

Brush. In a friend's house, sir.

Love. What friend?

Brush. Why, a tavern.

Love. What took him there?

Brush. A coach, sir.

Love. How d'ye mean?

Brush. A coach and six, sir; no less, I'll assure you, sir.

Love. A coach and six!

Brush. Yes, sir, six whores and a carted bawd. He picked 'em all up in the street, and is gone, with this splendid retinue, into the Sun by Covent-Garden. I asked him what he meant? He told me, that he only wanted to whet, when the very sight of 'em turned my stomach.

Love. The fellow will have his swing, though he hang for't. However, run to him, and bid him take the name of Mockmode, call himself Mockmode upon all occasions; and tell him that he shall find me here about four in the afternoon.—Ask no questions, but fly!—[*Exit* BRUSH.] So:—his usurping that name gives him a title to court Lucinda, by which I shall discover her inclinations to this Mockmode, whose coming to town has certainly occasioned her quarrel with me; while I set the hound himself upon a wrong scent, and, ten to one, provide for mistress Trudge by the bargain. 'Tis said, one can't be a friend and a lover.
But opposite to that, this plot shall prove,
I'll serve my friend by what assists my love. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* LUCINDA'S *House.*

Enter LEANTHE.

Lean. Methinks this livery suits ill my birth:
But slave to Love, I must not disobey;
His service is the hardest vassalage,
Forcing the powers divine to lay their godships down,
To be more gods, more happy here below.—
Thus I, poor wanderer, have left my country,
Disguised myself so much, I hardly know
Whether this habit, or my love, be blindest;
To follow one, perhaps, that loves me not,
Though every breath of his soft words was passion,
And every accent love. O Roebuck! [*Weeps.*

Enter ROEBUCK.

Roe. This is the page, love's link-boy, that must light me the way.—How now, pretty boy; has your lady beaten you? ha!—This lady must be a Venus, for she has got a Cupid in her family. 'Tis a wondrous pretty boy:—[LEANTHE *starts, and stares at him*] but a very comical boy.—What the devil does he stare at?

Lean. [*Aside.*] Oh, Heavens! is the object real, or are my eyes false? Is that Roebuck, or am I Leanthe? I am afraid he's not the same; and too sure I'm not myself. [*Weeps.*

Roe. What offence could such pretty innocence commit, to deserve a punishment to make you cry?

Lean. O sir! a wondrous offence.

Roe. What was it, my child?

Lean. I pricked my finger with a pin, till I made it bleed.

Roe. Such little boys as you should have a care of sharp things.

Lean. Indeed, sir, we ought; for it pricked me so deep, that the sore went to my very heart.

Roe. Poor boy!—here's a plaster for your sore finger. [*Gives* LEANTHE *gold.*

Lean. Sir, you had best keep it for a sore-finger. [*Returns it.*

Roe. O' my conscience the boy's witty, but not very wise in returning gold.—Come, come, you shall take it. [*Forces it upon her, and kisses her.*

Lean. That's the fitter cure for my sore finger.—The same dear lips still. Oh that the tongue within them were as true! [*Aside.*

Roe. [*Aside.*] By heavens, this boy has the softest pair of lips I ever tasted! I ne'er found before that ladies kissed their pages; but now if this rogue were not too young, I should suspect he were beforehand with me. Egad, I must kiss him again.—[*Aloud.*] Come, you shall take the money. [*Kisses.*

Lean. [*Aside.*] Oh, how he bribes me into bribery!—[*Aloud.*] But what must I do with this money, sir?

Roe. You must get a little mistress, and treat her with it.

Lean. Sir, I have one mistress already; and they say, no man can serve two masters, much less two mistresses. How many mistresses have you, pray?

Roe. [*Aside.*] Um!—Egad, the boy has posed me.—[*Aloud.*] How many, child? Why, let me see—there was Mrs. Mary, Mrs. Margaret, Mrs. Lucy, Mrs. Susan, Mrs. Judy, and so forth, to the number of five-and-twenty or thereabouts.

Lean. Oh ye powers! and did you love 'em all?

Roe. Yes, desperately. I would have drank and fought for any one of 'em: I have sworn and lied to every one of 'em, and have lain with 'em all: that's for your encouragement, boy. Learn betimes, youth; young plants should be watered. Your smock-face was made for a chamber-utensil.

Lean. And did not one escape ye?

Roe. Yes, one did;—the devil take her!

Lean. What, don't you love her then?

Roe. No, faith; but I bear her an amorous grudge still, something between love and spite.—I could kill her with kindness.

Lean. I don't believe it, sir; you could not be so hard-hearted sure: her honourable passion, I think, should please you best.

Roe. O child! boys of your age are continually reading romances, filling your heads with that old bombast of love and honour: but when you come to my years, you'll understand better things.

Lean. And must I be a false treacherous villain when I come to your years, sir? Is falsehood and perjury essential to the perfect state of manhood?

Roe. Psha! children and old men always talk thus foolishly.—You understand nothing, boy.

Lean. Yes, sir, I've been in love, and much more than you, I perceive.

Roe. [*Aside.*] It appears then, that there's no service in the world so educating to a boy as a lady's.—By Jove, this spark may be older than I imagine.—[*Aloud.*] Hark ye, sir; do you never pull off your lady's shoes and stockings? do you never reach her the—pincushion? do you never sit on her bedside, and sing to her? ha!—Come, tell me, that's my good boy. [*Makes much of her.*

Lean. Yes, I do sing her asleep sometimes.

Roe. But do you never waken her again?

Lean. No, but I constantly wake myself; my rest's always disturbed by visions of the devil.

Roe. [*Aside.*] Who would imagine now, that this young shaver could dream of a woman so soon?—[*Aloud.*] But what songs does your lady delight in most?

Lean. Passionate ones, sir; I'll sing you one of 'em, if you'll stay.

Roe. With all my heart, my little cherubim.—The rogue is fond of showing his parts.—Come, begin.

LEANTHE *sings.*

How bless'd are lovers in disguise!
Like gods, they see,
As I do thee,
Unseen by human eyes.
Exposed to view,
I'm hid from you,
I'm alter'd, yet the same:
The dark conceals me,
Love reveals me;
Love, which lights me by its flame.

Were you not false, you me would know;
For though your eyes
Could not devise,
Your heart had told you so.
Your heart would beat
With eager heat,
And me by sympathy would find:
True love might see,
One changed like me,
False love is only blind.

Roe. Oh my little angel in voice and shape!—[*Kisses her.*] I could wish myself a female for thy sake.

Lean. You're much better as you are for my sake. [*Aside.*

Roe. Or, if thou wert a woman, I would—

Lean. What would you? marry me? would you marry me?

Roe. Marry you, child! no, no: I love you too well for that; you should not have my hand, but all my body at once. But to our business: is your lady at home?

Lean. My lady! what business have you with my lady, pray, sir?

Roe. Don't ask questions. You know Mr. Lovewell?

Lean. Yes, very well. He's my great friend, and one I would serve above all the world,—but his sister.

Roe. [*Aside.*] His sister!—Ha! that gives me a twinge for my sin.—[*Aloud.*] Pray, Mr. Page, was Leanthe well when you left her?

Lean. No, sir; but wondrous melancholy, by the departure of a dear friend of hers to another world.

Roe. Oh, that was the person mentioned in her letter, whose departure occasioned your departure for England.

Lean. That was the occasion of my coming, too sure, sir.—Oh, 'twas a dear friend to me! the loss makes me weep.

Roe. [*Aside.*] Poor tender-hearted creature! But I still find there was not a word of me.—

[*Aloud.*] Pray, good boy, let your mistress know, here's one to-wait on her.

Lean. Your business is from Mr. Lovewell, I suppose, sir?

Roe. Yes, yes.

Lean. Then I'll go. [*Exit.*

Roe. I've thrown my cast, and am fairly in for't. But an't I an impudent dog? Had I as much gold in my breeches as brass in my face, I durst attempt a whole nunnery. This lady is a reputed virtue, of good fortune and quality; I am a rakehelly rascal not worth a groat; and without any farther ceremony am going to debauch her.—But hold! She does not know that I'm this rakehelly rascal; and I know that she's a woman, one of eighteen too; beautiful, witty. O' my conscience, upon second thoughts, I am not so very impudent neither. Now as to my management, I'll first try the whining addresses, and see if she'll bleed in the soft vein.

Enter LUCINDA.

Luc. Have you any business with me, sir?

Roe. Thus looked the forbidden fruit, luscious and tempting. 'Tis ripe, and will soon fall, if one will shake the tree. [*Aside.*

Luc. Have you any business with me, sir? [*Comes nearer.*

Roe. Yes, madam, the business of mankind, to adore you.—[*Aside.*] My love, like my blood, circulates through my veins, and at every pulse of my heart animates me with a fresh passion.—[*Aloud.*] Wonder not, madam, at the power of your eyes, whose painted darts have struck on a young and tender heart, which they easily pierced, and which, unaccustomed to such wounds, finds the smart more painful.

Lean. [*Peeping in.*] Oh, traitor! just such words he spoke to me.

Luc. Heyday! I was never so attacked in all my life. In love with me, sir! did you ever see me before?

Roe. [*Aside.*] Never, by Jove.—[*Aloud.*] Oh, ten thousand times, madam! Your lovely idea is always in my view, either asleep or awake, eating or drinking, walking, sitting, or standing; alone or in company, my fancy wholly feeds upon your dear image, and every thought is you.—[*Aside.*] Now have I told about fifteen lies in a breath!

Luc. I suppose, sir, you are some conceited young scribbler, who has got the benefits of a first play in your pocket, and are now going a-fortune-hunting.

Roe. But why a scribbler, madam? Are my clothes so coarse, as if they were spun by those lazy spinsters the Muses? does the parting of my fore-top show so thin, as if it resembled the two withered tops of Parnassus? do you see anything peculiarly whimsical or ill-natured in my face? is my countenance strained, as if my head were distorted by a strangury of thought? is there anything proudly, slovenly, or affectedly careless in my dress? do my hands look like paper-moths? I think, madam, I have nothing poetical about me.

Luc. Yes, sir, you have wit enough to talk like a fool; and are fool enough to talk like a wit.

Roe. You called me poet, madam; and I know no better way of revenge, than to convince you that I am one by my impudence. [*Offers to kiss her hand.*

Luc. Then make me a copy of verses upon that, sir. [*Hits him on the ear, and exit.*

Re-enter LEANTHE.

Lean. How d'ye like the subject, sir?

Roe. 'Tis a very copious one.—[*Spitting.*] It has made my jolls rhyme in my head. This it is to be thought a poet! every minx must be casting his profession in his teeth.—What, gone!

Lean. Ay, she knows that making verses requires solitude and retirement.

Roe. She certainly was afraid I intended to beg leave to dedicate something.—If ever I make love like a poetical fool again, may I never receive any favour but a subject for a copy of verses.

Re-enter LUCINDA.

Luc. [*Aside.*] I won't dismiss him thus, for fear he lampoon me.—[*Aloud.*] Well, sir, have you done them?

Roe. Yes, madam, will you please to read. [*Catches her and kisses her three or four times.*

Lean. [*Aside.*] Oh, Heaven! I can never bear it. I must devise some means to part 'em. [*Exit.*

Luc. Sir, your verses are too rough and constrained. However, because I gave the occasion, I'll pardon what's past.

Roe. [*Aside.*] By the Lord, she was angry only because I did not make the first offer to her lips!—[*Aloud.*] Then, madam, the peace is concluded?

Luc. Yes; and therefore both parties should draw out of the field. [*Going.*

Roe. Not till we make reprisals. I make peace with sword in hand, madam, and till you return my heart, which you have taken, or your own in exchange, I will not put up. And so, madam, I proclaim open war again. [*Catches her.*

Re-enter LEANTHE.

Lean. O madam! yonder's poor little Crab, your lapdog, has got his head between two of the window-bars, and is like to be strangled. [*The dog howls behind the scenes.*

Luc. Oh Lard, my poor Crabby! I must run to the rescue of my poor dog; I'll wait on you instantly.—Come, come, page.—Poor Crabby! [*Exit with* LEANTHE.

Roe. Oh, the devil choke Crabby!—Well, I find there's much more rhetoric in the lips than in the tongue. Had buss been the first word of my courtship, I might have gained the outworks by this. Impudence in love is like courage in war; though both blind chances, because women and Fortune rule them.

Re-enter LEANTHE.

Lean. Sir, my lady begs your pardon; there's something extraordinary happened, which prevents her waiting on you, as she promised.

Roe. What, has monsieur Crabby rubbed some of the hairs off his neck? has he disordered his pretty ears? She won't come again then?

Lean. No, sir; you must excuse her.

Roe. Then I'll go be drunk.—Hark'ee, sirrah I have half a dozen delicious creatures waiting for me at the Sun; you shall along with me and have your choice. I'll enter you into the school of Venus, child. 'Tis time you had lost your maidenhead, you're too old for playthings.

Lean. [*Aside.*] O Heavens! I had rather he should stay than go there.—[*Aloud.*] But why will you keep such company, sir?

Roe. Nay, if you're for advice, farewell!

Men of ripe understanding should always despise
What babes only practise, and dotards advise.
[*Exit singing.*

Lean. Wild as winds, and unconfined as air!—Yet I may reclaim him. His follies are weakly founded, upon the principles of honour, where the very foundation helps to undermine the structure. How charming would virtue look in him, whose behaviour can add a grace to the unseemliness of vice!

Re-enter LUCINDA.

Luc. What, is the gentleman gone?

Lean. Yes, madam. He was instantly taken ill with a violent pain in his stomach, and was forced to hurry away in a chair to his lodging. [*Exit.*

Luc. Oh, poor gentleman! He's one of those conceited fools that think no female can resist their temptations. Blockheads that imagine all wit to consist in blaspheming heaven and women.—I'll feed his vanity, but starve his love.

And may all coxcombs meet no better fate,
Who doubt our sex's virtue, or dare prompt our hate. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Widow BULLFINCH'S *House.*

LYRIC *discovered in a nightgown and cap, writing at a table, on which are papers scattered about.*

Lyr. Two as good lines as ever were written!—[*Rising.*] Egad I shall maul these topping fellows! Says Mr. Lee,

Let there be not one glimpse, one starry spark,
But gods meet gods, and jostle in the dark.

Says little Lyric,

Let all the lights be burnt out to a snuff,
And gods meet gods, and play at blindman's-buff.

Very well!

Let gods meet gods, and so—fall out and cuff.

That's much mended. They're as noble lines as ever were penned.—Oh! here comes my damned muse; I'm always in the humour of writing elegy after a little of her inspiration.

Enter Widow BULLFINCH.

Bull. Mr. Lyric, what do you mean by all this? Here you have lodged two years in my house, promised me eighteen-pence a week for your lodging, and I have never received eighteen farthings, not the value of that, Mr. Lyric.—[*Snaps with her fingers.*] You always put me off with telling me of your play, your play! Sir, you shall play no more with me; I'm in earnest.

Lyr. [*Aside.*] This living on love is the dearest lodging—a man's eternally dunned, though perhaps he have less of one ready coin than t'other.—[*Aloud.*] There's more trouble in a play than you imagine, madam.

Bull. There's more trouble with a lodger than you think, Mr. Lyric.

Lyr. First, there's the decorum of time.

Bull. Which you never observe: for you keep the worst hours of any lodger in town.

Lyr. Then there's the exactness of characters.

Bull. And you have the most scandalous one I ever heard.

Lyr. Then there's laying the drama.

Bull. Then you foul my napkins and towels.

Lyr. Then there are preparations of incidents, working the passions, beauty of expression, closeness of plot, justness of place, turn of language, opening the catastrophe.

Bull. Then you wear out my sheets, burn my fire and candle, dirty my house, eat my meat, destroy my drink, wear out my furniture—I have lent you money out of my pocket.

Lyr. [*Aside.*] Was ever poor rogue so ridden! If ever the Muses had a horse, I am he.—[*Aloud.*] Faith, madam, poor Pegasus is jaded.

Bull. Come, come, sir, he shan't slip his neck out of the collar for all that. Money I will have, and money I must have; let your play and you both be damned!

Lyr. Well, madam, my bookseller is to bring me some twenty guineas for a few sheets of mine presently, which I hope will free me from your sheets.

Bull. My sheets, Mr. Lyric! pray what d'ye mean? I'll assure you, sir, my sheets are finer than any of your Muses' spinning—marry come up!

Lyr. Faith, you have spun me so fine, that you have almost cracked my thread of life; as may appear by my spindle-shanks.

Bull. Why sure—where was your Thalia, and your Melpomene, when the tailor would have stripped you of your silk waistcoat, and have clapped you on a stone doublet? Would all your golden verse have paid the serjeant's fees?

Lyr. Truly, you freed me from jail, to confine me in a dungeon; you did not ransom me, but bought me as a slave; so, madam, I'll purchase my freedom as soon as possible. Flesh and blood can't bear it.

Bull. Take your course, sir.—There were a couple of gentlemen just now to inquire for you; and if they come again, they shan't be put off with the old story of your being abroad, I'll promise you that, sir. [*Exit.*

Lyr. Zoons! if this bookseller does not bring me money—

Enter PAMPHLET.

Oh! Mr. Pamphlet, your servant. Have you perused my poems?

Pam. Yes, sir; and there are some things very well, extraordinary well, Mr. Lyric. But I don't think 'em for my purpose.—Poetry is a mere drug, sir.

Lyr. Is that because I take physic when I write. —[*Aside.*] Damn this costive fellow, now does he not apprehend the joke!

Pam. No, sir; but your name does not recommend 'em. One must write himself into a consumption before he gain reputation.

Lyr. That's the way to lie abed when his name's up. Now, I lie abed before I can gain reputation.

Pam. Why so, sir?

Lyr. Because I have scarcely any clothes to put on.—If ever man did penance in a white sheet—

Pam. You stand only sometimes in a white sheet for your offences with your landlady. Faith, I have often wondered how your muse could take such flights, yoked to such a cartload as she is.

Lyr. Oh! they are like the Irish horses, they draw best by the tail.—Have you ever seen any of my burlesque, Mr. Pamphlet? I have a project of turning three or four of our most topping fellows into doggrel. As for example:— [*Reads.*

Conquest with laurels has our arms adorn'd,
And Rome in tears of blood our anger mourn'd.
Now,
Butchers with rosemary have our beef adorn'd,
Which has in gravy tears our hunger mourn'd.
How d'ye like it, Mr. Pamphlet, ha?—Well—
Like gods, we pass'd the rugged Alpine hills;
Melted our way, and drove our hissing wheels
Through cloudy deluges, eternal rills.
Now observe, Mr. Pamphlet; pray observe.
Like razors keen, our knives cut passage clean
Through rills of fat, and deluges of lean.

Pam. Very well, upon my soul!

Lyr. Hurl'd dreadful fire and vinegar infused.

Pam. Ay, sir, vinegar! how patly that comes in for the beef, Mr. Lyric! 'Tis all wondrous fine indeed.

Lyr. [*Aside.*] This is the most ingenious fellow of his trade that I have seen; he understands a good thing.—[*Aloud.*] But as to our business. What are you willing to give for these poems? Prithee say something. There are about three thousand lines.—Here, take 'em for a couple of guineas.

Pam. No, sir; paper is so excessive dear, that I dare not venture upon 'em.

Lyr. Well, because you're a friend, I'll bestow 'em upon you. Here, take 'em all.—[*Aside.*] There's the hopes of a dedication still.

Pam. I give you a thousand thanks, sir; but I dare not venture the hazard; they'll never quit cost indeed, sir.

Lyr. [*Aside.*] This fellow is one of the greatest blockheads that ever was a member of a corporation.—How shall I be revenged?

Enter Boy.

Boy. Sir, there are two men below desire to have the honour of kissing your hand.

Lyr. They must be knaves or fools, by their fulsome compliment. Hark ye—[*Whispers* Boy.] Bid 'em walk up.

Pam. Since you have got company, sir, I'll take my leave.

Lyr. No, no, Mr. Pamphlet, by no means! We must drink before we part. Boy, a pint of sack and a toast.—[*Exit* Boy.] These are two gentlemen out of the country, who will be for all the new things lately published; they'll be good customers. Come, sit down.—You have not seen my play yet?—Here take the pen, and if you see anything amiss correct it; I'll go bring 'em up.—Stay, lend me your hat and wig, or I shall take cold going down stairs.

[*Takes* PAMPHLET'S *hat and wig, and puts his cap on* PAMPHLET'S *head, and exit.*

Pam. This is a right poetical cap; 'tis baize the outside, and the lining fustian.—[*Reading.*] This is all stuff, worse than his poems.

Enter two Bailiffs *behind and clap him on the shoulder.*

1 *Bail.* Sir, you're the king's prisoner.

Pam. That's a good fancy enough, Mr. Lyric! But pray don't interrupt me, I'm in the best scene. Egad the drama is very well laid.

2 *Bail.* Come, sir.

Pam. Well, well, sir, I'll pledge ye. Prithee now, good Mr. Lyric, don't disturb me.—
And furious lightnings brandish'd in her eyes.
That's true spirit of poetry.

1 *Bail.* Zoons, sir, d'ye banter us?

[*Takes him under each arm, and hauls him up.*

Pam. Gentlemen, I beg your pardon. How d'ye like the city, gentlemen? If you have any occasion for books to carry into the country, I can furnish you as well as any man about Paul's. Where's Mr. Lyric?

1 *Bail.* These wits are damnable cunning!—I always have double fees for arresting one of you wits. All your evasions won't do; we understand trap, sir; you must not think to catch old birds with chaff, sir.

Pam. Zoons, gentlemen, I'm not the person! I'm a freeman of the city; I have good effects, gentlemen, good effects. D'ye think to make a fool of me? I'm a bookseller, no poet.

2 *Bail.* Ay, sir, we know what you are by your fool's cap there.

1 *Bail.* Yes, one of you wits would have passed upon us for a corn-cutter yesterday; and was so like one we had almost believed him. [*Hauls him.*

Pam. Why, gentlemen! gentlemen! officers! have a little patience, and Mr. Lyric will come up stairs.

1 *Bail.* No, no; Mr. Lyric shall go down stairs. He would have us wait till some friends come in to rescue him. Ah! these wits are devilish cunning.

[*Exeunt* Bailiffs *hauling* PAMPHLET.

Re-enter LYRIC, *with* MOCKMODE *and* CLUB.

Lyr. Ha! ha! ha! very poetical, faith; a good plot for a play, Mr. Mockmode; a bookseller bound in calves' leather; ha! ha! ha!—How they walked along, like the three volumes of the *English Rogue* squeezed together on a shelf!

Mock. What was it? what was it, Mr. Lyric?

Lyr. Why, I am a statesman, sir.—I can't but laugh to think how they'll spunge the sheet before the errata be blotted out; and then how he'll hamper the dogs for false imprisonment.

Mock. But pray, what's the matter, Mr. Lyric?

Lyr. Nothing, sir, but a shirking bookseller that owed me about forty guineas for a few lines. He would have put me off, so I sent for a couple of bull-dogs, and arrested him.

Mock. Oh Lord! Mr. Lyric, honesty's quite out of doors; 'tis a rare thing to find a man that's a true friend, a true friend is a rare thing indeed! Mr. Lyric, will you be my friend? I only want that accomplishment. I have got a mistress, a dancing and fencing-master; and now I want only a friend to be a fine gentleman.

Lyr. Have you never had a friend, sir?

Mock. Yes, a very honest fellow; our friendship commenced in the college-cellar, and we loved one another like two brothers, till we unluckily fell out afterwards at a game at tables.

Lyr. [*Aside.*] I find then that neither of ye lost by the set.—[*Aloud.*] But my short acquaintance can't recommend me to such a trust.

Mock. Psha, acquaintance!—You must be a man of honour, as you're a poet, sir?

Lyr. But what use would you make of a friend, sir?

Mock. Only to tell my secrets to, and be my second.—Now, sir, a wit must be best to keep a secret, because what you say to one's prejudice will be thought malice. Then you must have a devilish deal of courage, by your heroic writing.—
But know, that I alone am king of me.

Heavens! sure the author of that line must be a plaguy stout fellow; it makes me valiant as Hector when I read it.

Lyr. Sir, we stick to what we write as little as divines to what they preach.—Besides, sir, there are other qualifications requisite in a friend—he must lend you money. Now, sir, I can't be that friend, for I want forty guineas.

Mock. Sir, I can lend you fifty upon good security.—'Twas the last word my father spoke on his death-bed, that I should never lend money without security.

Lyr. Fy, sir! security from a friend, and a man of honour by his profession too!

Mock. By the universe that's true, you are my friend. Then I'll tell you a secret. [*They whisper.*

Club. Now will this plaguy wit turn my nose out of joint.—I was my master's friend before, though I never found the knack of borrowing money; though I have received some marks of his friendship, some sound drubs about the head and shoulders, or so. I have been bound for him too in the stocks, for his breaking windows, very often. [*Aside.*

Lyr. Mr. Mockmode, you may be imposed upon. I would see this lady you court. I know Mr. Lovewell has a mistress named Lucinda; but that she lodges in this house I much doubt.

Mock. Imposed upon! that's very comical—ha! ha! ha! You shall see, sir; come.—Pray, sir, you're my friend.

Lyr. Nay, pray; indeed, sir, I beg your—[*They compliment for the door*] pardon; you're a squire, sir.

Mock. Zauns, sir, you lie, I'm not a fool! I'll take an affront from no man.—Draw, sir! [*Draws.*

Club. Draw, sir!—Egad I'll put his nose out of joint now.

Lyr. Unequal numbers, gentlemen.

Club. I'm only my master's friend, his second, or so, sir.

Lyr. What's the matter, noble squire?

Mock. You lie again, sir; zauns, draw! [*Strikes him with his sword.*

Lyr. Ha!—a blow!—Essex, a blow!—yet I will be calm.

Club. Zoons, draw, sir! [*Strikes him.*

Lyr. Oh patience, Heaven!—Thou art my friend still.

Mock. You lie, sir!

Lyr. Then thou art a traitor! tyrant! monster!

Mock. Zauns, sir, you're a son of a whore, and a rascal!

Club. A scribbler!

Lyr. Ah! ah!—that stings home.—Scribbler!

Mock. Ay, scribbler! ballad-maker!

Lyr. Nay, then—
I and the gods will fight it with ye all. [*Draws.*

Enter ROEBUCK *drunk, and singing.*

Roe. *France ne'er will comply*
Till her claret run dry;
Then let's pull away to defeat her:
He hinders the peace,
Who refuses his glass,
And deserves to be hang'd for a traitor.

Now, my myrmidons, fall on; I have taken off the odds.

Dub a dub, dub a dub, to the battle! [*Sings.*

Zoons, gentlemen, why don't ye fight? Blood, fight! Oblige me so far to fight a little; I long to see a little sport.

Lyr. Sir, I scorn to show sport to any man. [*Puts up.*

Mock. And so do I, by the universe.

Club. And I, by the universe.

Lyr. I shall take another time. [*Exit.*

Roe. Here, rascal, take your chopping-knife,—[*Gives* CLUB *his sword.*] and bring me a joint of that coward's flesh for your master's supper.—Fly, dog. [*Takes him by the nose.*

Club. Auh! This fellow's likeliest to put my nose out of joint. [*Exit.*

Roe. Now, sir, tell me, how you durst be a coward.

Mock. Coward, sir! I'm a man of great estate, sir; I have five thousand acres of as good fighting ground as any in England, good *terra firma*, sir. Coward, sir! Have a care what you say, sir. My father was a parliament man, sir; and I was bred at the college, sir.

Roe. Oh then I know your genealogy; your father was a senior fellow, and your mother was an air-pump. You were suckled by Platonic ideas, and you have some of your mother's milk in your nose yet.

Mock. Form the proposition by mode and figure, sir.

Roe. I told you so. Blow your nose, child; and have a care of dirting your philosophical slabbering-bib.

Mock. What d'ye mean, sir?

Roe. Your starched band, set by mode and figure, sir.

Mock. Band, sir!—This fellow's blind-drunk.—I wear a cravat, sir.

Roe. Then set a good face upon the matter. Throw off childishness and folly, with your hanging-sleeves. Now you have left the university, learn, learn!

Mock. [*Aside.*] This fellow's an atheist, by the universe; I'll take notice of him, and inform against him for being drunk.—[*Aloud.*] Pray, sir, what's your name?

Roe. My name! by the Lord, I have forgot!—Stay, I shall think on't by and by.

Mock. Zauns, forget your own name! your memory must be very short, sir.

Roe. Ay, so it seems, for I was but christened this morning, and I have forgot it already.

Mock. Was your worship then Turk or Jew before?—[*Aside.*] I knew he was some damned bloody dog.

Roe. Sir, I have been Turk, or Jew rather, since; for I have got a plaguy heathenish name.—Pox on't!—oh! now I have it.—Mo—Mock—mo—Mockmode!

Mock. Mockmode! Mockmode! Sir, pray how do you spell it?

Roe. Go you to your A, B, C, you came last from the university.

Mock. Sir, I'm called Mockmode. What family are you of, sir?

Roe. What family are you of, sir?

Mock. Of Mockmode-hall in Shropshire.

Roe. Then I'm of the same, I believe. I fancy, sir, that you and I are near relations.

Mock. Relations! sir, there are but two families; my father's, who is now dead; and his brother's, Colonel Peaceable Mockmode.

Roe. Ay ay, the very same colonel Peaceable. Is not he colonel of militia?

Mock. Yes, sir.

Roe. And was not he high-sheriff of the county last year?

Mock. The very same, sir.

Roe. The very same; I'm of that family. And your father died about—let me see—

Mock. About half a year ago.

Roe. Exactly; by the same token you got drunk at a hunting-match that very day seven-night he was buried.

Mock. [*Aside.*] This fellow's a witch!—[*Aloud.*] But it looks very strange that you should be christened this morning. I'm sure your godfathers had a plaguy deal to answer for.

Roe. Oh, sir, I'm of age to answer for myself.

Mock. One would not think so, you're so forgetful. 'Tis two-and-twenty years since I was christened, and I can remember my name still.

Roe. Come, we'll take a glass of wine, and that will clear our understanding. We'll remember our friends.

Mock. You must excuse me, sir.—[*Aside.*] This is some sharper.

Roe. Nay, prithee, cousin, good cousin Mockmode, one glass. I know you are an honest fellow. We must remember our relations in the country, indeed, sir.

Mock. Oh, sir, you're so short of memory you can never call 'em to mind. You have forgot yourself, sir; Mockmode is a heathenish name sir, and all that, sir. And so I beg your pardon sir. [*Exit.*

Roe. Now were I lawyer enough, by that little inquiry into that fellow's concerns, I could bring in a false deed to cheat him of his estate.

Enter BRUSH.

Where the devil is thy master? You said I should find him here.

Brush. 'Tis impossible for you, or me, or anybody to find him.

Roe. Why?

Brush. Because he has lost himself. The devil has made a juggler's ball of him, I believe. He's here now; then, Presto! pass in an instant. He has got some damned business to-day in hand.

Roe. Ay, so it seems. I must be squire Mockmode, and court an honourable mistress in the devil's name! Well, let my sober thinking friend plot on, and lay traps to catch futurity; I'm for holding fast the present. I have got about twenty guineas in my pocket; and whilst they last the devil take George if he thinks of futurity. I'll go hand in hand with Fortune.

She is an honest, giddy, reeling punk;
My head, her wheel, turn round, and so we both are drunk. [*Exit reeling,* BRUSH *following.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* LUCINDA'S *House.*

Enter LEANTHE, PINDRESS *following with a paper of sweetmeats in her hand.*

Pin. Here, here, page, your lady has sent you some sweetmeats; but indeed you shan't have 'em till you hire me.

Lean. She sent sour sauce, when she made you the bearer. [*Aside.*

Pin. Prithee now, what makes you constantly so melancholy? Come, you must be merry, and shall be merry; I'll get you some playthings.

Lean. I believe you want playthings more than I.—But I would be private, Pindress.

Pin. Well, my child, I'll be private with you. Boys and girls should still be private together; and we may be as retired as we please; for my mistress is reading in her closet, and all the servants are below. But what concerns have you? I'm sure, such a little boy can have no great business in private.

Lean. [*Aside.*] I will try thee for once.—[*Aloud.*] Yes, Mrs. Pindress, I have great inclination.

Pin. To what? to do what, sir?—Don't name it! 'Tis all in vain;—you shan't do it; you need not ask it.

Lean. Only to kiss you. [*Kisses her.*

Pin. Oh fy sir! indeed I'll none of your kisses. Take it back again—[*Kisses* LEANTHE.] Is not the taste of the sweetmeats very pretty about my lips?

Lean. O hang your liquorish chaps! you'd fain be licking your lips, I find that.

Pin. Indeed, Mr. Page, I won't pay you the kisses you won from me last night at cross-purposes; and you shan't think to keep my pawn neither. Pray give me my Hungary bottle. As I hope to be saved I will have my Hungary bottle.—[*Rummaging* LEANTHE.] I'm stronger than you. I'll carry you in, and throw you upon the bed, and take it from you. [*Takes* LEANTHE *in her arms.*

Lean. Help! help! I shall be ravished! help! help!

Enter LUCINDA.

Luc. What's the matter?—Oh bless me!

Pin. Oh dear, madam, this unlucky boy had almost spoiled me. Did not your ladyship hear me cry I should be ravished? I was so weak, I could not resist the little strong rogue; he whipped me up in his arms, like a baby; and had not your ladyship come in—

Luc. What, sirrah! would you debauch my maid, you little cock-sparrow? must you be billing too? I have a great mind to make her whip you, sirrah.

Pin. Oh dear, madam, let me do't! I'll take him into the room, and I will so chastise him—

Luc. But do you think you'll be able, Pindress? I'll send one of the men to help you.

Pin. No, no, madam: I could manage him with one hand. See here, madam.

[*Takes* LEANTHE *in her arms, and is running away.*

Luc. Hold, hold! Is this you that the little strong rogue had almost ravished? He snatched you up in his arms like a baby! Ah, Pindress, Pindress! I see y'are very weak indeed. Are not you ashamed, girl, to debauch my little boy?

Pin. Your ladyship gave me orders to make him

merry, and divert his melancholy; and I know no better way than to tease him a little. I'm afraid the boy is troubled with the rickets, and a little shaking, madam, would do him some good.

Lean. [*Aside.*] I am tired with impertinence, and have other business to mind. [*Exit.*

Pin. I hope your ladyship entertains no ill opinion of my virtue.

Luc. Truly I don't know what to think on't: but I've so good an opinion of your sense, as to believe you would not play the fool with a child.

Pin. We're all subject to playing the fool, if you continue your resolution in marrying the first man that asks you the question.

Luc. No, my mind's changed; I'll never marry any man.

Pin. [*Aside.*] I dare swear that resolution breaks sooner than the former.—[*Aloud.*] Ah, madam, madam! if you never believe man again, you must never be woman again; for though we are as cunning as serpents, we are naturally as flexible too. Speak ingenuously, madam; if Mr. Lovewell should, with an amorous whine, and suppliant cringe, tell you a formal story, contrary to what we suspect, would you not believe him?

Luc. What, believe his vain assertions before the demonstration of my senses! no, no; my love's not so blind. Did I not see his miss and his child? did I not behold him giving her money? did I not hear him declare he would settle her in a lodging?

Pin. But, madam, upon serious reflection, where's the great harm in all this? Most ladies would be overjoyed at such a discovery of their lover's ability. The child seemed a lusty chopping boy; and let me tell you, madam, it must be a lusty chopping boy that got it.

Luc. Urge no farther in his defence; he's a villain, and of all villains that I hate most, an hypocritical one. The ladies give him the epithet of modest, and the gentlemen that of sober Lovewell. Now methinks, such a piece of debauchery sits so awkwardly on a person of his character, that it adds an unseemliness to the natural vileness of the vice; and he that dares be a hypocrite in religion, will certainly be one in love.—Stay, is not that he? [*Pointing outwards.*

Pin. Yes, madam; I believe he's going to the Park.

Luc. Call a couple of chairs quickly; we'll thither masked.—[*Exit* PINDRESS.] This day's adventures argue some intended plot upon me, which I may countermine by only setting a face upon the matter. [*Puts her mask on.*

For as hypocrisy in men can move,
Here's the best hypocrite in female love.
On even scores designing Heaven took care;
Since men false hearts, that we false faces wear.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Park.*

Enter LOVEWELL *and* LYRIC, *meeting.*

Lyr. [Reading.] *I'll rack thy reputation, blast thy fame,*
And in strong grinding satire gibbet up thy name.

Love. What! in a rapture, Mr. Lyric?

Lyr. A little poetical fury, that's all.—I'll squire him! I'll draw his character for the buffoon of a farce! he shall be as famous in ballad as Robin Hood, or Little John; my muses shall haunt him like demons; they shall make him more ridiculous than Don Quixote.

Love. Because he encountered your windmill-pate.—Ha! ha! ha!—Come, come, Mr. Lyric, you must be pacified.

Lyr. Pacified, sir! Zoons, sir, he's a fool, has not a grain of sense! Were he an ingenious fellow, or a man of parts, I could bear a kicking from him; but an abuse from a blockhead! I can never suffer it. [*Reads.*

Pert blockhead, who has purchased by the school
Just sense enough to make a noted fool.

That stings, Mr. Lovewell.

Love. Pray, sir, let me see it.

Lyr. This is imperfect, sir: but if you please to give your judgment on this piece.—[*Gives him a paper.*] 'Tis a piece of burlesque on some of our late writings.

Love. Ay, you poets mount first on the shoulders of your predecessors, to see farther in making discoveries; and having once got the upper-hand, you spurn them under-foot. I think you should bear a veneration to their very ashes.

Lyr. Ay, if most of their writings had been burned! I declare, Mr. Lovewell, their fame has only made them the more remarkably faulty: their great beauties only illustrate their greater errors.

Love. Well, you saw the new tragedy last night; how did it please ye?

Lyr. Very well; it made me laugh heartily.

Love. What, laugh at a tragedy!

Lyr. I laugh to see the ladies cry; to see so many weep at the death of the fabulous hero. Who would but laugh, if the poet that made 'em were hanged! On my conscience, these tragedies make the ladies vent all their love and honour at their eyes, when the same white handkerchief that blows their noses, must be a winding-sheet to the deceased hero.

Love. Then there's something in the handkerchief to embalm him, Mr. Lyric? ha! ha! ha!—But what relish have you of comedy?

Lyr. No satisfactory one: my curiosity is forestalled by a foreknowledge of what shall happen; for as the hero in tragedy is either a whining cringing fool, that's always a-stabbing himself, or a ranting, hectoring bully, that's for killing everybody else: so the hero in comedy is always the poet's character.

Love. What's that?

Lyr. A compound of practical rake and speculative gentleman, who always bears off the great fortune in the play, and shams the beau and squire with a whore or chambermaid: and as the catastrophe of all tragedies is death, so the end of comedies is marriage.

Love. And some think that the most tragical conclusion of the two.

Lyr. And therefore my eyes are diverted by a better comedy in the audience than that upon the stage. I have often wondered why men should be fond of seeing fools ill represented, when at the same time and place they may behold the mighty originals acting their parts to the life in the boxes!

Love. Oh! be favourable to the ladies, Mr. Lyric; 'tis your interest. Beauty is the deity of poetry; and if you rebel, you'll certainly run the fate of your first parent, the devil!

Lyr. You're out, sir! Beauty is a merciful deity, and allows us sometimes to be a little atheistical: and 'tis so indulgent to wit, that it is pleased with it, though in the worst habit—that of satire. Besides, there can appear no greater argument of our esteem than raillery, because 'tis still founded upon jealousy; occasioned by their preferring senseless fops and wealthy fools to men of wit and merit, the great upholders of the empire.

Love. Now I think these favourites of the ladies are more witty than you.

Lyr. How so, pray, sir?

Love. Because they play the fool, conscious that it will please; and you're a wit, when sensible that coxcombs only are encouraged. I wonder, Mr. Lyric, that a man of your sense should turn poet! You'll hardly ever find a man that is capable of the employment will undertake it.

Lyr. The reason of that is, every one that knows not a tittle of the matter pretends to be a judge of it. By the Lard, Mr. Lovewell, I put the critics next to plague, pestilence, and famine, in my litany! Had you seen 'em last night in the pit, with such demure supercilious faces—their contemplative wigs thrust judiciously backwards—their hands rubbing their temples, to chafe ill-nature, and with a hissing venomous tongue pronouncing, Pish! Stuff! Intolerable! Damn him!—Lord have mercy upon us!

Love. Ay, and you shall have others as foolish as they are ill-natured; fond of being thought wits, who shall laugh outrageously at every smutty jest; cry, Very well, by Gad! That's fine, by heavens! —and if a distich of rhyme happens, they clap so damnably loud that they drown the jest.

Lyr. That's the jest! the wit lies in their hands. And if you would tell a poet his fortune, you must gather it from the palmistry of the audience; for as nothing's ill said but what's ill taken, so nothing's well said but what's well taken. And between you and I, Mr. Lovewell, poetry, without these laughing fools, were a bell without a clapper; an empty sounding business, good for nothing; and all we professors might go hang ourselves in the bell-ropes!

Love. Ha! ha! ha!—But I thought poetry was instructive.

Lyr. Oh, Gad forgive me, that's true!—To ladies it is morally beneficial: for you must know, they are too nice to read sermons—such instructions are too gross for their refined apprehensions: but any precepts that may be instilled by easy numbers, such as of Rochester, and others, make great converts. Then they hate to hear a fellow in church preach methodical nonsense, with a firstly, secondly, and thirdly: but they take up with some of our modern plays in their closet, where the morality must be devilish instructive!—But I must be gone;—here comes the squire. What, in the name of wonder, has he got with him?

Love. That which shall afford you a more plentiful revenge than your lampoon, if you join with me in the plot. To the better effecting of which, you must be seemingly reconciled to him. Let's step aside, and observe 'em while I give you a hint of the matter.

[*Exeunt between the scenes, and seem to confer and hearken.*

Enter MOCKMODE, *leading* TRUDGE *dressed like a Widow.*

Mock. This is very fine weather, blessed weather indeed, madam! 'twill do abundance of good to the grass and corn.

Trudge. Ay, sir, the days are grown a great length; and I think the weather much better here than in Ireland.

Mock. Why, madam, were you ever there?

Trudge. Oh, no! not I indeed, sir; but I have heard my first husband (rest his soul!) say so.—He was an Irish gentleman.

Mock. I find, madam, you have loved your first husband mightily, for you affect his tone in discourse.—Pray, madam, what did that mourning cost a yard?

Trudge. [*Aside.*] O Lard! what shall I say now? 'tis none of mine.—[*Aloud.*] It cost, sir,—let me see—it cost about—but it was my steward bought it for me; I never buy such small things.

Mock. [*Aside.*] By the universe, she must be plaguy rich! I will be brisk.—[*Aloud.*] Pray, madam—I—I pray, madam, will you give us a song?

Trudge. A song!—Indeed then I had a good voice before Mr. Roebuck spoiled it.

Mock. Mr. Roebuck! was that your first husband's name, madam?

Love. [*Behind.*] She'll spoil all.

Trudge. No, sir: Roebuck was a doctor that let me blood under the tongue for the quinsy, and made me hoarse ever since.

Mock. [*Aside.*] By the universe, she's a widow, and I'll be a little brisk!—[*Aloud.*] Madam, will you grant me a small favour, and I will bend upon my knees to receive it? [*Kneels.*

Trudge. What is't, pray?

Mock. Only to take off your garter.

Re-enter LOVEWELL.

Love. [*Aside.*] Zoons! her thick leg will discover all!—[*Aloud.*] By your leave, sir, have you any pretensions to this lady?

[*Pushes* MOCKMODE *down.*

Mock. [*Aside.*] I don't know whether this be an affront or not.—[*Aloud.*] Pretensions, sir! I have so great a veneration for the lady, that I honour any man that has pretensions to her.—Demme, sir! may I crave the honour of your acquaintance?

Love. No, sir.

Mock. [*Aside.*] No, sir! egad that must be wit, for it can't be good manners!—[*Aloud.*] Sir, I respect all men of sense, and would therefore beg to know your name.

Love. No matter, sir; I know your name's Mockmode.

Mock. By the universe, that's very comical! That a fellow should pretend to tell me my own name!—Another question, if you please, sir.

Love. What is it, sir?

Mock. Pray, sir, what's my christened name?

Love. Sir, you don't know.

Mock. Zauns, sir! would you persuade me out of my christened name? I'll lay you a guinea that I do know, by the universe!—[*Pulls a handful of money out.*] Here's silver, sir; here's silver, sir; I can command as much money as another, sir; I am at age, sir, and I won't be bantered, sir!

Love. Sir, you must know that I baptise you Rival; for your love to this lady is the only sign of Christianity you can boast of.—And now, sir, my name's Lovewell.

Mock. Then I say, sir, that your love to that lady is the only sign of a Turk you can brag of.—[*Aside.*] I wish Club were come.

Love. Sir, I shall certainly circumcise you, if you make any farther pretensions to madam Lucinda here.

Mock. Circumcise me! circumcise a pudding's-end, sir!—Zauns, sir! I'll be judged by the lady who merits circumcision most, you or I, sir.—These London blades are all stark mad!—

[LOVEWELL *courts* TRUDGE *in dumb show.*

Enter LUCINDA *and* PINDRESS, *seeing the others they abscond.*

I met one about two hours ago that had forgot his name, and this fellow would persuade me now that I had forgot mine!—Mr. Lyric is the only man that speaks plain to me: I must be friends with him, because I find I may have occasion for such a friend.—I'll find him out straight. [*Exit.*

Love. Madam, will you walk? [*Exit with* TRUDGE.

Luc. [*Coming forward.*] Now my doubts are removed!

Pin. Mine are more puzzling. There must be something in this more than we imagine. You had best talk to him.

Luc. Yes, if my tongue bore poison in it, and that I could spit death in his face!

Pin. If he is lost, your hard usage this morning has occasioned it.

Luc. I'm glad on't; I've gained by the loss; I despise him more now than e'er I loved him! That passion which can stoop so low as that blowze, is an object too mean for anything but my scorn to level at!

Pin. This were a critical minute for your new lover the squire, I fancy; Mr. Lovewell's disgrace would bring him into favour presently.

Luc. It certainly shall, if he be not as great a fool as t'other's false.

Pin. You may be mistaken in your opinion of him, as much as you have been in Mr. Lovewell.

Luc. No, Pindress; I shall find what I read in the last miscellanies very true.

But two distinctions their whole sex does part;
All fools by nature; or all rogues by art.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Another part of the same.*

Enter several Masks *crossing the stage,* ROEBUCK *following.*

Roe. 'Sdeath! what a coney-borough's here! the trade goes swimmingly on. This is the great empory of lewdness, as the Change is of knavery. The merchants cheat the world there, and their wives gull them here. I begin to think whoring scandalous, 'tis grown so mechanical. My modesty will do me no good, I fear.—Madam, are you a whore? [*Catches a* Mask.

1 *Mask.* Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Roe. Short and pithy!—If ever woman spoke truth I believe thou hast.—[Second Mask *pulls him by the elbow.*] Have you any business with me, madam?

2 *Mask.* Pray, sir, be civil; you're mistaken, sir.—[*Aside.*] I have had an eye upon this fellow all this afternoon.—[*Aloud.*] You're mistaken, sir.

Roe. Very likely, madam; for I imagined you modest.

2 *Mask.* So I am, for I'm married.

Roe. And married to your sorrow, I warrant you!

2 *Mask.* Yes, upon my honour, sir.

Roe. I knew it. I have met above a dozen this evening, all married to their sorrow.—Then I suppose you're a citizen's wife; and by the broadness of your bottom, I should guess you sat very much behind a counter.

2 *Mask.* My husband's no mercer, he's a judge.

Roe. Zoons, a judge! I shall be arraigned at the bar for keeping on my hat so long.—'Tis very hard, madam, he should not do you justice: has not he an estate in tail, madam?

2 *Mask.* I seldom examine his papers; they are a parcel of old dry shrivelled parchments; and this court-hand is so devilish crabbed I can't endure it.

Roe. Umph!—Then I suppose, madam, you want a young lawyer to put your case to. But faith, madam, I am a judge too.

2 *Mask.* Oh heavens forbid! Such a young man!

Roe. That's, I'll do nothing without a bribe.—Pray, madam, how does that watch strike?

2 *Mask.* It never strikes, it only points to the business, as you must do, without telling tales. Dare you meet me two hours hence?

Roe. Ay, madam, but I shall never hit the time exactly without a watch.

2 *Mask.* Well, take it.—At ten exactly, at the fountain in the Middle-Temple. *Coke upon Littleton* be the word. [*Exit.*

Roe. So—If the law be all such volumes as thou, mercy on the poor students! From *Coke upon Littleton* in sheets deliver me.

Enter LOVEWELL.

Love. What, engaged? Myrmidon! I find you'll never quit the battle till you have cracked a pike in the service.

Roe. Oh, dear friend! thou'rt critically come to my relief; for faith I'm almost tired.

Love. What a miserable creature is a whore! whom every fool dares pretend to love, and every wise man hates.

Roe. What, moralising again! Oh, I'll tell thee news, man; I'm entered in the inns, by the Lard!

Love. Psha!

Roe. Nay, if you won't believe me, see my note of admission. [*Shows the watch.*

Love. A gold watch, boy!

Roe. Ay, a gold watch, boy.

Love. Whence had you money to buy it?

Roe. I took it upon tick, and I design to pay honestly.

Love. I don't like this running o'th' score.—But what news from Lucinda, boy? is she kind? ha?

Enter a Mask *crossing the stage.*

Roe. Ha! there's a stately cruiser; I must give her one chase.—I'll tell you when I return. [*Exit, running.*

Love. I find he has been at a loss there, which occasions his eagerness for the game here. I begin to repent me of my suspicion; I believe her virtue so sacred, that 'tis a piece of atheism to

distrust its existence. But jealousy in love, like the devil in religion, is still raising doubts, which without a firm faith in what we adore, will certainly damn us.

Enter a Porter.

Por. Is your name Mr. Roebuck, sir?

Love. What would you have with Mr. Roebuck, sir?

Por. I have a small note for him, sir.

Love. Let me see't.

Por. Ay, sir; if your name be Mr. Roebuck, sir.

Love. My name is Roebuck, blockhead.

Por. God bless you, master.

[*Gives him a letter, and exit.*

Love. This is some tawdry billet, with a scrawling adieu at the end on't. These strolling jades know a young wholesome fellow newly come to town, as well as a parson's wife does a fat goose. 'Tis certainly some secret, and therefore shall be known. [*Opens the letter.*

Sir, *Tuesday,* 3 *o'clock.*

My behaviour towards you this morning was somewhat strange; but I shall tell you the cause of it, if you meet me at ten this night in our garden; the back-door shall be open.—Yours,—

LUCINDA.

——Oh, Heavens! Certainly it can't be! *L, U, C, I, N, D, A;* that spells woman. 'Twas never written so plain before. Roebuck, thou'rt as true an oracle as she's a false one. Oh, thou damned Sibyl! I have courted thee these three years, and could never obtain above a kiss of the hand, and this fellow in an hour or two has obtained the back-door open! Mr. Roebuck, since I have discovered some of your secrets, I'll make bold to open some more of 'em.—But how shall I shake him off?—Oh, I have it; I'll seek him instantly. [*Exit.*

Re-enter ROEBUCK *meeting the* Porter.

Roe. Here, you sir, have you a note for one Roebuck?

Por. I had, sir; but I gave it him just now.

Roe. You lie, sirrah! I am the man.

Por. I an't positive I gave it to the right person; but I'm very sure I did; for he answered the description the page gave to a T, sir.

Roe. 'Twas well I met that page, dog, or now should I cut thy throat, rascal!

Por. Bless your worship, noble sir! [*Exit.*

Roe. At ten, in the garden!—the back-door open!—Oh, the delicious place and hour!—Soft panting breasts! — Trembling joints! — Melting sighs! and eager embraces!—Oh, ecstacy!—but how to shake off Lovewell!—This is his nicely virtuous! ha! ha! ha!—This is his innate principle of virtue! ha! ha! ha!

Re-enter LOVEWELL.

Love. How now! why so merry!

Roe. Merry! why, 'twould make a dog split, man; ha! ha! ha!—The watch, sir, the watch; ha! ha! ha!

Love. What of the watch? You laugh by the hour; you'll be run down by and by, sure!

Roe. Ay, but I shall be wound up again. This watch I had for a fee, lawyer.—Should I ever be tried before this judge, how I should laugh to see how gravely his goose cap sits upon a pair of horns; ha! ha! ha!

Love. Thou'rt horn mad. Prithee leave impertinence.—I received a note just now.

Roe. A note! 'sdeath, what note! what d'ye mean? who brought it?

Love. A gentleman; 'tis a challenge.

Roe. Oh, thanks to the stars! I'm glad on't. [*Aside.*

Love. And you may be signally serviceable to me in this affair. I can give you no greater testimony of my affection than by making so free with you.

Roe. What needs all this formality? I'll be thy second, without all this impertinence.

Love. There's more than that, friend. In the first place I don't understand a sword; and again, I'm to be called to the bar this term, and such a business might prejudice me extremely. So, sir, you must meet and fight for me.

Roe. Faith, Lovewell, I shan't stick to cut a throat for my friend at any time, so I may do it fairly, or so.—The hour and place?

Love. This very evening, in Moorfields.

Roe. Umph! how will you employ yourself the while?

Love. I'll follow you at a distance, lest you have any foul play.

Roe. Which if you do—No, faith, Ned, since I'm to answer an appointment for you, you must make good an assignation for me. I'm to meet one of your ladies at the fountain in the Temple tonight. You may be called to the bar there, if you will. This watch will tell you the hour, and shall be your passport. Let me have yours.

[*Changes watches.*

Love. Oh, was that the jest? Ha! ha! ha!—Well, I will answer an assignation for you sure enough. Ha! ha! ha!—[*Aside.*] How readily does the fool run to have his throat cut!

Roe. [*Aside.*] How eagerly now does my moral friend run to the devil, having hopes of profit in the wind! I have shabbed him off purely.—[*Aloud.*] But prithee, Ned, where had you this fine jewel?

[*Viewing one tied to the watch.*

Love. Psha! a trifle, a trifle, from a mistress!—Take care on't though. But hark ye, George; don't push too home; have a care of whipping through the guts.

Roe. 'Gad, I'm afraid one or both of us may fall. But d'ye hear, Ned, remember you sent me on this errand, and are therefore answerable for all mischief; if I do whip my adversary through the lungs, or so, remember you set me upon't.

Love. Well, honest George, you won't believe how much you oblige me in this courtesy.

Roe. You know always I oblige myself by serving my friend.—[*Aside.*] I never thought this spark was a coward before.

Love. [*Aside.*] I never imagined this fellow was so easy before.—[*Aloud.*] Well, good success to us both; and when we meet, we'll relate all transactions that pass.

Roe. That you're a fool.

Love. That you're an ass.

[*Exeunt severally, laughing.*

Re-enter LOVEWELL *crossing the stage hastily,* MOCKMODE *and* LYRIC *following him.*

Lyr. Mr. Lovewell, a word w'ye.

Love. Let it be short, pray sir, for my business is urgent, and 'tis almost dark.

Lyr. I'm reconciled to the squire, and want

only the presentment of a copy of verses to ingratiate myself wholly, throughly. Let me have that piece I lent just now.

Love. Ay, ay, with all my heart.—Here,—farewell!

[*Pulls the poem hastily, justles out a letter with it, which* MOCKMODE *takes up, and exit.*

Lyr. Now, sir, here's a poem, which (according to the way of us poets) I say, was written at fifteen, but between you and I it was made at five-and-twenty.

Mock. Five-and-twenty!—When is a poet at age, pray, sir?

Lyr. At the third night of his first play; for he's never a man till then.

Mock. But when at years of discretion?

Lyr. When they leave writing, and that's seldom or never.

Mock. But who are your guardians?

Lyr. The critics, who with their good will would never let us come to age.—But what have you got there?

Mock. By the universe, I don't know; 'tis a woman's hand; some billet-doux, I suppose; it justled out of Lovewell's pocket. We'll to the next light and read it. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A dark Arbour in* LUCINDA'S *Garden.*

Enter ROEBUCK.

Roe. Oh, how I reverence a back-door half open, half shut! 'Tis the narrow gate to the lover's paradise; Cupid stood sentry at the entrance; love was the word, and he let me pass.—Now is my friend pleading for life; he has a puzzling case to manage, ten to one he's nonsuited; I have gulled him fairly.

Enter LOVEWELL.

Love. I've got in, thanks to my stars, or rather the clouds, whose influence is my best friend at present. Now is Roebuck gazing, or rather groping about for a fellow with a long sword; and I know his fighting humour will be as mad to be balked by an enemy as by a mistress.

Roe. Hark, hark! I hear a voice; it must be she.—Lucinda!

Love. True to the touch, I find.—Is it you, my dear?

Roe. Yes, my dear.

Love. Let me embrace thee, my heart.

Roe. Come to my arms.

[*Runs into each other's arms. Finding the mistake, start back.*

Love. 'Slife! a man!

Roe. 'Sdeath! a devil!—and wert thou a legion, here's a wand should conjure thee down. [*Draws.*

Love. We should find whose charm is strongest. [*Draws.*

[*They push by one another; ROEBUCK passes out at the opposite door: and as* LOVEWELL *is passing out on the other side of the stage,*

Enter LEANTHE, *wearing a nightgown over her Page's dress.*

Lean. Mr. Roebuck! sir, Mr. Roebuck!

Love. That's a woman's voice, I'll swear.—Madam!

Lean. Sir!

Love. Come, my dear Lucinda; I've staid a little too long; but making an apology now were only lengthening the offence. Let's into the arbour, and make up for the moments misspent.

Lean. Hold, sir: do you love this Lucinda, you're so fond of hauling into the arbour?

Love. Yes, by all that's powerful.

Lean. [*Aside.*] False, false Roebuck!—I am lost.

Love. Madam, do you love this Roebuck, that you opened the garden-door to so late?

Lean. I'm afraid I do too well.

Love. And did you never own an affection to another?

Lean. No; witness all those powers you just now mentioned!

Love. Revenge yourselves, ye Heavens!—Behold in me your accuser, and your judge! Behold Lovewell, injured Lovewell!—This darkness, which opportunely hides your blushes, makes your shame more monstrous.

Lean. Ha! Lovewell! I'm vexed 'tis he, but glad to be mistaken. Now, female policy, assist me. [*Aside.*

Love. Yes, madam, your silence proclaims you guilty.—Farewell, woman!

Lean. Ha! ha! ha!

Love. What, am I made your scorn?

Lean. Ha! ha! ha!—This happens better than I expected. Ha! ha! ha!—Mr. Lovewell!

Love. No counterplotting, madam; the mine's sprung already, and all your deceit discovered.

Lean. Indeed, you're a fine fellow at discovering deceits, I must confess, that could not find whether I was a man or a woman all this time.

Love. What, the page!

Lean. No counterplotting, good sir; the mine's sprung already.—Ah, sir, I fancy Mr. Roebuck is better at discovering a man from a woman in the dark than you.

Love. This discovery is the greatest riddle!—Prithee, child, what makes thee disguised? But above all, what meant that letter to Roebuck?

Lean. Then I find you intercepted it.—Why, sir, my lady had a mind to put a trick upon the impudent fellow, made him an assignation, and sent me in her stead, to banter him. But when I tell her how you fell into the snare, and how jealous you were—Ha! ha! ha!

Love. Oh, my little dear rogue! was that the matter?—[*Hugs her.*] O' my conscience, thou'rt so soft, I believe thou art a woman still.—But who was that man I encountered just now?

Lean. [*Aside.*] A man! 'twas certainly Roebuck.—[*Aloud.*] Some of the footmen, I suppose. Come, sir, I must conduct you out immediately, lest some more of 'em meet you.

[*Conducts him to the door, and returns.*

He certainly was here, and I have missed him,
Fortune delights with innocence to play,
And loves to hoodwink those already blind.
Wary deceit can many by-ways tread,
To shun the blocks in virtue's open road,
Whilst heedless innocence still falls on ruin.
Yet, whilst by love inspired, I will pursue
What men by courage, we by love can do.
Not even his falsehood shall my claim remove;
From mutual fires none can true passion prove;
For like to like, is gratitude not love.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *An Antechamber in* LUCINDA'S *House.—The Flat Scene half open, discovers a bedchamber;* LUCINDA *in her night-gown, and reading by a table.*

Enter ROEBUCK, *groping his way.*

Roe. On what new happy climate am I thrown? This house is love's labyrinth; I have stumbled into it by chance.—Ha! an illusion! let me look again.—Eyes, if you play me false, [*Looking about*] I'll pluck ye out.—'Tis she; 'tis Lucinda! alone, undressed, in a bedchamber, between eleven and twelve a clock. A blessed opportunity!—Now if her innate principle of virtue defend her, then is my innate principle of manhood not worth twopence.—Hold, she comes forward.

Luc. [*Comes forward, reading.*] Unjust prerogative of faithless man,
Abusing power which partial Heaven has granted!
In former ages, love and honour stood
As props and beauties to the female cause;
But now lie prostitute to scorn and sport.
Man, made our monarch, is a tyrant grown,
And womankind must bear a second fall.

Roe. [*Aside.*] Ay, and a third too, or I'm mistaken.—I must divert this plaguy romantic humour.

Luc. While virtue guided peace, and honour war,
Their fruits and spoils were offerings made to love.

Roe. And 'tis so still; for— [*Raising his voice.*
Beau with earliest cherries Miss does grace,
And soldier offers spoils of Flanders lace.

Luc. Ha!—Protect me, Heavens! what art thou!

Roe. A man, madam.

Luc. What accursed spirit has driven you hither?

Roe. The spirit of flesh and blood, madam.

Luc. Sir, what encouragement have you ever received to prompt you to this impudence?

Roe. [*Aside.*] Umph! I must not own the reception of a note from her.—[*Aloud.*] Faith, madam, I know not whether to attribute it to chance, fortune, my good stars, my fate, or my destiny: but here I am, madam, and here I will be. [*Taking her by the hand.*

Luc. [*Pulling her hand away.*] If a gentleman, my commands may cause you withdraw; if a ruffian, my footmen shall dispose of you.

Roe. Madam, I'm a gentleman; I know how to oblige a lady, and how to save her reputation. My love and honour go linked together; they are my principals: and if you'll be my second, we'll engage immediately.

Luc. Stand off, sir! the name of love and honour are burlesqued by thy professing 'em. Thy love is impudence, and thy honour a cheat. Thy mien and habit show thee a gentleman; but thy behaviour is brutal. Thou art a centaur; only one part man, and the other beast.

Roe. [*Aside.*] Philosophy in petticoats! no wonder women wear the breeches!—[*Aloud.*] And, madam, you are a demi-goddess; only one part woman, t'other angel; and thus divided, claim my love and adoration.

Luc. Honourable love is the parent of mankind; but thine is the corrupter and debaser of it.—The passion of you libertines is like your drunkenness; heat of lust, as t'other is of wine, and off with the next sleep.

Roe. No, madam; a hair of the same—is my receipt.—Come, come, madam, all things are laid to rest that will disturb our pleasure; whole nature favours us; the kind indulgent stars that directed me hither, wink at what we are about.—'Twere jilting of fortune to be now idle; and she, like a true woman, once balked, never affords a second opportunity.—I'll put out the candle, the torch of love shall light us to bed.

Luc. To bed, sir!—thou hast impudence enough to draw thy rationality in question. Whence proceeds it? from a vain thought of thy own graces, or an opinion of my virtue?—If from the latter, know that I am a woman, whose modesty dare not doubt my virtue; yet have so much pride to support it, that the dying groans of thy whole sex, at my feet, should not extort an immodest thought from me.

Roe. Your thoughts may be as modest as you please, madam.—You shall be as virtuous to-morrow morning as e'er a nun in Europe; the opinion of the world shall proclaim you as such, and that's the surest charter the most rigid virtue in England is held by. The night has no eyes to see, nor have I a tongue to tell: one kiss shall seal up my lips for ever.

Luc. That uncharitable censure of women argues the meanness of thy conversation.

Roe. [*Aside.*] Her superior virtue awes me into coldness.—'Slife! it can't be twelve, sure—night's a liar. [*Draws out his watch.*

Luc. Sir, if you won't be gone, I must fetch those shall conduct you hence.—[*Passing by him towards the door, she perceives the jewel tied to the watch.*] My eyes are dazzled, sure; Pray, sir, let me see that jewel.

Roe. [*Aside.*] By Heavens, she has a mind to't!—[*Aloud.*] Oh, 'tis at your service with all my soul.

Luc. Wrong not my virtue by so poor a thought.—But answer directly, as you are a gentleman, to what I now shall ask: whence had you that jewel?

Roe. I exchanged watches with a gentleman, and had this jewel into the bargain. He valued it not, 'twas a trifle from a mistress.

Luc. A trifle, said he!—[*Aside.*] Oh indignation! slighted thus!—I'll put a jewel out of his power, that he would pawn his soul to retrieve.—[*Aloud.*] If you be a gentleman, sir, whom gratitude can work up to love, or a virtuous wife reclaim, I'll make you a large return for that trifle.

Roe. Heyday! a wife, said she? [*Aside.*

Luc. What's your name, sir? and of what country?

Roe. My name's Roebuck, madam.

Luc. Roebuck!

Roe. [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath! I forgot my instructions.—[*Aloud.*] Mockmode, madam.—Roebuck Mockmode, my name, and surname.

Luc. [*Aside.*] Mockmode, my squire! it can't be! But if it should, I've made the better exchange.—[*Aloud.*] Of what family are you, sir?

Roe. Of Mockmode-hall in Shropshire, madam. My father's lately dead; I came lately from the university; I have fifteen hundred acres of as good fighting ground as any in England.—[*Aside.*] 'Twas lucky I met that blockhead to-day.

Luc. The very same!—And had you any directions to court a lady in London?

Roe. Umph!—How should I have found the way hither else, madam?—[*Aside.*] What the devil will this come to?

Luc. [*Aside.*] My fool that I dreamt of I find a pretty gentleman. Dreams go by contraries.—[*Aloud.*] Well, sir, I am the lady; and if your designs are honourable, I'm yours; take a turn in the garden till I send for my chaplain: you must take me immediately, for if I cool, I'm lost for ever. [*Exit.*

Roe. I think I am become a very sober Shropshire gentleman in good earnest; I don't start at the name of a parson.—O Fortune! Fortune! what art thou doing? If thou and my friend will throw me into the arms of a fine lady, and great fortune, how the devil can I help it! Oh, but, zoons, there's marriage! Ay, but there's money. Oh, but there are children, squalling children. Ay, but then there are rickets and small-pox, which perhaps may carry them all away. Oh, but there's horns! Horns! Ay, but then I shall go to heaven; for 'tis but reasonable, since all marriages are made in heaven, that all cuckolds should go thither. But then there's Leanthe?—that sticks. I love her, witness Heaven, I love her to that degree—psha! I shall whine presently. I love her as well as any woman; and what can she expect more? I can't drag a lover's chain a hundred miles by land, and a hundred leagues by water. Fortune has decreed it otherwise. So lead on, blind guide, I follow thee; and when the blind lead the blind, no wonder they both fall into—matrimony. [*Going.*

Enter LEANTHE.

Oh, my dear auspicious little Mercury! let me kiss thee. Go tell thy charming mistress I obey her commands. [*Exit.*

Lean. Her commands! Oh Heavens! I must follow him. *Going.*

Re-enter LUCINDA.

Luc. Page! page!

Lean. [*Aside.*] Oh, my cursed fortune! balked again!—[*Aloud.*] Madam!

Luc. Call my chaplain; I'm to be married presently.

Lean. Married so suddenly! To whom, pray, madam?

Luc. To the gentleman you met going hence just now.

Lean. Oh Heavens! your ladyship is not in earnest, madam?

Luc. What, is matrimony to be made a jest of? Don't be impertinent, boy; call him instantly.

Lean. [*Aside.*] What shall I do?—[*Aloud.*] Oh, madam, suspend it till the morning, for Heaven's sake. Mr. Lovewell is in the house; I met him not half an hour ago; and he will certainly kill the gentleman, and perhaps harm your ladyship.

Luc. Lovewell in my house! how came he hither?

Lean. I know not, madam. I saw him, and talked to him; he had his sword drawn, and he threatened everybody. Pray, delay it to-night, madam.

Luc. No, I'm resolved; and I'll prevent his discovering us; I'll put on a suit of your clothes, and order Pindress to carry her night-gown to the gentleman in the garden, and bid him meet me in the lower arbour, in the west corner, and send the chaplain thither instantly. [*Exit.*

Lean. Hold, Fortune, hold; thou hast entirely won;
For I am lost. Thus long I have been rack'd
On thy tormenting wheel, and now my heart-strings break.
Discovering who I am, exposes me to shame.
Then what on earth can help me?

Enter PINDRESS.

Pin. Oh Lord, page, what's the matter? Here's old doings, or rather new doings. Prithee, let you and I throw in our twopence apiece into this marriage lottery.

Lean. You'll draw nothing but blanks, I'll assure you, from me.—But stay, let me consider o' th' business.

Pin. No consideration; the business must be done hand overhead.

Lean. Well, I have one card to play still, and with you, Pindress. [*Takes her hand.*

Pin. You expect, though, that I should turn up trumps.

Lean. [*Aside.*] No, not if I shuffle right.—[*Aloud.*] Well, Pindress, 'tis a match. Begone to the lower arbour, at the west corner of the garden, and I'll come to thee immediately with the chaplain. You must not whisper, for we must pass upon the chaplain for my lady and the gentleman. Haste!

Pin. Shan't I put on my new gown first?

Lean. No, no; you shall have a green gown for your wedding in the arbour.

Pin. A green gown! well, all flesh is grass.

Lean. Make haste, my spouse, fly!

Pin. And will you come? will you be sure to come?—Oh, my little green gooseberry, my teeth waters at ye! [*Exit.*

Lean. Now chance—no, thou'rt blind—
Then Love, be thou my guide, and set me right;
Though blind, like Chance, you have best eyes by night. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Widow BULLFINCH'S *House.*

Enter LOVEWELL, BRUSH, *and* Servant.

Love. Mr. Lyric abroad, sayest thou! and Mockmode with him!

Serv. All abroad, my mistress and all.

Love. I don't understand this.—Brush, run to Lucinda's lodgings, and observe what's doing there: I spied some hasty lights glancing through the rooms; I'll follow you presently.—[*Exit* BRUSH.] Can't you inform me which way they went?

Serv. Perhaps Mr. Mockmode's man can inform ye.

Love. Pray call him.

Serv. Mr. Club! Mr. Club! [*Calls.*

Love. What, is the fellow deaf?

Serv. No, sir; but he's asleep, and in bed.—Mr. Club! Mr. Club! [*Calls.*

Club. [*Without.*] Augh — [*Yawning.*] I'm asleep! I'm asleep! don't wake me.—Augh!

Serv. Here's a gentleman wants ye. [*Exit.*

Enter CLUB, *with his coat unbuttoned, his garters untied, scratching and yawning, as newly wakened from bed.*

Club. Pox o' your London breeding! what makes you waken a man out of his sleep that way?

Love. Where's your master, pray, sir?

Club. Augh! 'Tis a sad thing to be broken of one's rest this way.

Love. Can you inform me where your master's gone?

Club. My master!—Augh!— [*Stretching and yawning.*

Love. Yes, sir, your master.

Club. My master! Augh!—What o'clock is it, sir? I believe 'tis past midnight, for I have gotten my first sleep.—Augh!

Love. Thou'rt asleep still, blockhead! Answer me, or—where's your master?

Club. Augh! I had the pleasantest dream when you called me—augh! I thought my master's great black stone-horse had broke loose among the mares.—Augh! And so, sir, you called me.—Augh! And so I wakened.

Love. Sirrah! — [*Striking him.*] Now your dream's out, I hope.

Club. Zauns, sir! what d'ye mean, sir? My master's as good a man as you, sir; dem me, sir!

Love. Tell me presently, where your master is, sirrah, or I'll dust the secret out of your jacket.

Club. Oh, sir, your name's Lovewell, sir!

Love. What then, sir?

Club. Why then my master is—where you are not, sir. My master's in a fine lady's arms, and you are—here, I take it. [*Shrugging.*

Love. Has he got a whore abed with him?

Club. He may be father to the son of a whore by this time, if your mistress Lucinda be one; Mr. Lyric did his business, and my master will do her business, I warrant him, if o' th' right Shropshire breed, which I'm sure he is, for my mother nursed him on my milk.

Love. Two calves suckled on the same cow, ha! ha! ha! Gramercy, poet! has he brought the play to a catastrophe so soon? A rare executioner, to clap him in the female pillory already, ha! ha! ha!

Club. Ay, sir; and a pillory that you would give your ears for; I warrant you think my master's over head and ears in the Irish quagmire you would have drowned him in. But, sir, we have found the bottom on't.

Love. He may pass over the quagmire, sirrah; for there were stepping-stones laid in his way.

Club. He has got over dry-shod, I'll assure you. Pray, sir, did not you receive a note from Lucinda, the true Lucinda, to meet her at ten in her garden to-night?—Why don't you laugh now? ha! ha! ha!

Love. 'Sdeath, rascal, what intelligence could you have of that?

Club. Hold, sir, I have more intelligence. You threw Mr. Lyric his poem, in a hurry, in the Park, and justled that sweet letter out of your pocket, sir. This letter fell into my master's hands, sir, and discovered your sham, sir, your trick, sir. Now, sir, I think you're as deep in the mud as he is in the mire.

Love. Cursed misfortune!—And where are they gone, sir? Quickly, the truth, the whole truth, dog, or I'll spit you like a sparrow!

Club. I design to tell you, sir. Mr. Lyric, sir, being my master's intimate friend, or so, upon a bribe of a hundred pounds, or so, has sided with him, taken him to Lucinda's garden in your stead, and there's a parson, and all, and so forth.—Now, sir, I hope the poet has brought the play to a very good cata—cata—what d'ye call him, sir?

Love. 'Twas he I encountered in the garden.—'Sdeath! tricked by the poet! I'll cut off one of his limbs, I'll make a synalepha of him; I'll—

Club. He! he! he!—two calves sucked on the same cow!—he! he!

Love. Nay, then I begin with you. [*Drubs him.*

Club. Zauns! murder! dem me! zauns! murder! zauns! [*Runs off,* LOVEWELL *after him.*

SCENE III.—*The Antechamber in* LUCINDA'S *House; a hat and sword on the table.*

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. I have been peeping and crouching about like a cat a-mousing. Ha! I smell a rat.—A sword and hat!—There are certainly a pair of breeches appertaining to these, and may be lapped up in my lady's lavender, who knows! [*Listens.*

Enter LOVEWELL, *in a hurry.*

Love. What, sir? what are you doing? I'm ruined, tricked.—

Brush. I believe so too, sir. See here! [*Shows the hat and sword.*

Love. By all my hopes, Roebuck's hat and sword! This is mischief upon mischief.—Run you to the garden, sirrah; and if you find anybody, secure 'em, I'll search the house.—I'm ruined!—Fly!—[*Exit* BRUSH.] Roebuck!—What hoa!—Roebuck!—hoa!

Enter ROEBUCK *unbuttoned; runs to* LOVEWELL *and embraces him.*

Roe. Dear, dear Lovewell, wish me joy! wish me joy, my friend!

Love. Of what, sir?

Roe. Of the dearest, tenderest, whitest, softest, bride that ever blessed man's arms! I'm all air, all a Cupid, all wings, and must fly again to her embraces. Detain me not, my friend.

Love. Hold, sir; I hope you mock me! though that itself's unkind.

Roe. Mock you!—By Heavens, no! she's more than sense can bear, or tongue express.—O Lucinda! should Heaven—

Love. Hold, sir; no more!

Roe. I'm on the rack of pleasure, and must confess all.

When her soft melting, white, and yielding waist,
Within my pressing arms was folded fast,
Our lips were melted down by heat of love,
And lay incorporate in liquid kisses,
Whilst in soft broken sighs we catch'd each other's souls.

Love. Come, come, Roebuck, no more of this extravagance.—By Heaven I swear you shan't marry her!

Roe. By Heaven I swear so too; for I'm married already.

Love. Then thou'rt a villain!

Roe. A villain, man!—Psha! that's nonsense. A poor fellow can no sooner get married, than you imagine he may be called a villain presently. You may call me fool, a blockhead, or an ass, by the authority of custom: but why a villain, for God's sake?

Love. Did not you engage to meet and fight a gentleman for me in Moorfields?

Roe. Did not you promise to engage a lady for me at the fountain, sir?

Love. This Lucinda is my mistress, sir.

Roe. This Lucinda, sir, is my wife.

Love. Then this decides the matter.—Draw!

[*Throws* ROEBUCK *his sword and draws his own.*

Roe. Prithee be quiet, man, I've other business to mind on my wedding-night. I must in to my bride. [*Going.*

Love. Hold, sir! move a step, and by Heavens I'll stab thee.

Roe. Put up, put up! Psha! I an't prepared to die; I an't, devil take me!

Love. Do you dally with me, sir?

Roe. Why, you won't be so unconscionable as to kill a man so suddenly? I han't made my will yet. Perhaps I may leave you a legacy.

Love. Pardon me, Heavens, if pressed by stinging taunts,
My passion urge my arm to act what's foul.

[*Offers to push at him.*

Roe. Hold!—[*Taking up his sword.*] 'Tis safest making peace, they say, with sword in hand.—I'll tell thee what, Ned, I would not lose this night's pleasure for the honour of fighting and vanquishing the Seven Champions of Christendom. Permit me then but this night to return to the arms of my dear bride, and faith and troth I'll take a fair thrust with you to-morrow morning.

Love. What! beg a poor reprieve for life!—Then thou'rt a coward.

Roe. You imagined the contrary when you employed me to fight for ye in Moorfields.

Love. Will nothing move thy gall?—Thou'rt base, ungrateful!

Roe. Ungrateful! I love thee, Ned; by Heavens, my friend, I love thee! Therefore name not that word again, for such a repetition would overpay all thy favours.

Love. A cheap, a very cheap way of making acknowledgment, and therefore thou hast catched, which makes thee more ungrateful.

Roe. My friendship even yet does balance passion; but throw in the least grain more of an affront, and by Heaven you turn the scale.

Love. [*Pausing.*] No, I've thought better; my reason clears: she's not worth my sword; a bully only should draw in her defence, for she's false, a prostitute. [*Puts up his sword.*

Roe. A prostitute! by Heavens thou liest!—[*Draws.*] Thou hast blasphemed. Her virtue answers the uncorrupted state of woman; so much above immodesty, that it mocks temptation. She has convinced me of the bright honour of her sex, and I stand champion now for the fair female cause.

Love. Then I have lost what nought on earth can pay. Curse on all doubts, all jealousies, that destroy our present happiness, by mistrusting the future! Thus misbelievers making their heaven uncertain, find a certain hell. And is she virtuous? Sound the bold charge aloud, which does proclaim me guilty.

Roe. By Heavens, as virtuous as thy sister.

Love. My sister!—Ha!—I fear, sir, your marriage with Lucinda has wronged my sister; for her you courted, and I heard she loved you.

Roe. I courted her, 'tis true, and loved her also;
Nay, my love to her rivall'd my friendship towards—;
And had my fate allow'd me time for thought,
Her dear remembrance might have stopp'd the marriage.
But since 'tis past I must own to you, to her,
And all the world,
That I cast off all former passion, and shall
Henceforth confine my love to the dear circle
Of her charming arms from which I just now parted.

Enter LEANTHE *in woman's loose apparel.*

Lean. I take you at your word. These are the arms that held you.

Roe. Oh gods and happiness! Leanthe!

Love. My sister! Heavens! it cannot be.

Roe. By Heavens it can, it shall, it must be so!
For none on earth could give such joys but she.
Who would have thought my joys could bear increase?
Lovewell, my friend, this is thy sister! 'Tis
Leanthe! My mistress! my bride! my wife!

Lean. I am your sister, sir; as such I beg you to pardon the effect of violent passion, which has driven me into some imprudent actions: but none such as may blot the honour of my virtue or family. To hold you no longer in suspense, 'twas I brought the letter from Leanthe; 'twas I managed the intrigue with Lucinda; I sent the note to Mr. Roebuck this afternoon; and I—

Roe. That was the bride of happy me.

Love. Thou art my sister and my guardian-angel;
For thou hast bless'd thyself, and bless'd thy brother.
Lucinda still is safe, and may be mine.

Roe. May!—She shall be thine, my friend.

Love. Where is Lucinda?

Enter MOCKMODE.

Mock. Not far off; though far enough from you, by the universe!

Lean. You must give me leave not to believe you, sir.

Mock. Oh, madam! I crave you ten thousand pardons, by the universe, madam!—Zauns, madam! Dem me, madam!

[*Offers to salute her awkwardly.*

Love. By your leave, sir— [*Thrusts him back.*

Roe. Ah, cousin Mockmode!—How do all our friends in Shropshire?—

Mock. Now, gentlemen, I thank you all for your trick, your sham. You imagine I have got your whore, cousin, your crack. But, gentlemen, by the assistance of a poet, your Sheely is metamorphosed into the real Lucinda; which your eyes shall testify. Bring in the jury there!—Guilty or not guilty?

Enter LYRIC *and* TRUDGE.

Trudge. Oh my dear Roebuck!—[*Throws off her mask, flies to him, takes him about the neck and kisses him.*] And faith is it you, dear joy? And where have you been these seven long years?

Mock. Zauns !

Roe. Hold off, stale iniquity !—[*To* LEANTHE.] Madam, you'll pardon this ?

Trudge. Indeed I won't live with that stranger. You promised to marry me, so you did. Ah, sir, Neddy's a brave boy, God bless him ; he's a whole armful ; Lord knows I had a heavy load of him.

Love. Guilty or not guilty, Mr. Mockmode ?

Mock. 'Tis past that ; I am condemned, I'm hanged in the marriage noose.—[*To* TRUDGE.] Hark ye, madam, was this the doctor that let you blood under the tongue for the quinsy ?

Trudge. Yes, that it was, sir.

Mock. Then he may do so again ; for the devil take me if ever I breathe a vein for ye !—Mr. Lyric, is this your poetical friendship ?

Lyr. I had only a mind to convince you of your squireship.

Love. Now, sister, my fears are over. But where's Lucinda ? how is she disposed of ?

Lean. The fear she lay under of being discovered by you, gave me an opportunity of imposing Pindress upon her instead of this gentleman, whom she expected to wear one of Pindress's nightgowns as a disguise. To make the cheat more current, she disguised herself in my clothes, which has made her pass on her maid for me ; and I by that opportunity putting on a suit of her's, passed upon this gentleman for Lucinda, my next business is to find her out, and beg her pardon, endeavour her reconcilement to you, which the discovery of the mistakes between both will easily effect. [*Exit.*

Roe. [*To* LYRIC.] Well, sir, how was your plot carried on ?

Lyr. Why this squire, (will you give me leave to call you so now ?) this squire had a mind to personate Lovewell, to catch Lucinda. So I made Trudge to personate Lucinda, and snap him in this very garden.—[*To* MOCKMODE.] Now, sir, you'll give me leave to write your epithalamium ?

Mock. My epithalamium ! my epitaph, screech-owl, for I'm buried alive. But I hope you'll return my hundred pound I gave you for marrying me ?

Lyr. No ; but for five hundred more I'll unmarry you. These are hard times, and men of industry must make money.

Mock. Here's the money, by the universe, sir ! a bill of five hundred pound sterling upon Mr. Ditto the mercer in Cheapside. Bring me a reprieve, and 'tis yours.

Lyr. Lay it in that gentleman's hands.—[MOCKMODE *gives* ROEBUCK *the bill.*] The executioner shall cut the rope.—[*Goes to the door and brings in* Widow BULLFINCH *dressed like a parson.*] Here's revelation for you ! [*Pulls open the gown.*

Mock. Oh thou damned whore of Babylon !

Love. What pope Joan the second ! were you the priest ?

Bull. Of the poet's ordination.

Lyr. Ay, ay, before the time of Christianity the poets were priests.

Mock. No wonder then that all the world were heathens !

Lyr. How d'ye like the plot ? would it not do well for a play ?—[*To* ROEBUCK.] My money, sir.

Roe. No, sir ; it belongs to this gentlewoman—[*Gives it to* TRUDGE] you have divorced her, and must give her separate maintenance. There's another turn of plot you were not aware of, Mr. Lyric.

Re-enter LEANTHE, *with* LUCINDA *and* PINDRESS.

Luc. You have told me wonders !

Lean. Here are these can testify the truth.—This gentleman is the real Mr. Mockmode, and much such another person as your dream represented.

Roe. I hope, madam, you'll pardon my dissembling, since only the hopes of so great a purchase could cause it.

Luc. Let my wishing you much joy and happiness in your bride testify my reconciliation ; and at the request of your sister, Mr. Lovewell, I pardon your past jealousies.—You threatened me, Mr. Lovewell, with an Irish entertainment at my wedding. I wish it present now, to assist at your sister's nuptials.

Lean. At my last going hence I sent for 'em, and they're ready.

Love. Call 'em in then.

[*An Irish entertainment of three men and three women, dressed after the Fingallian fashion.*

Luc. I must reward your sister, Mr. Lovewell, for the many services done me as my page. I therefore settle my fortune and myself on you, on this condition, that you make over your estate in Ireland to your sister, and that gentleman.

Love. 'Tis done ; only with this proviso, brother, that you forsake your extravagances.

Roe. Brother, you know I always slighted gold,
But most when offer'd as a sordid bribe.
I scorn to be bribed even to virtue,
But for bright virtue's sake I here embrace it.
[*Embracing* LEANTHE.
I have espoused all goodness with Leanthe,
And am divorced from all my former follies.
Woman's our fate. Wild and unlawful flames
Debauch us first, and softer love reclaims.
Thus paradise was lost by woman's fall ;
But virtuous woman thus restores it all.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE,

WRITTEN AND SPOKEN BY JO. HAYNES, IN MOURNING.

I come not here, our poet's fate to see,
He and his play may be both be damn'd for me:
No, Royal Theatre, I come to mourn for thee.
And must these structures then untimely fall,
Whilst the other house stands, and gets the devil and all?
Must still kind Fortune through all weathers steer 'em,
And beauties bloom there spite of *edax rerum*,
Vivitur ingenio, that damn'd motto there,
[*Looking up at it.*
Seduced me first to be a wicked player.
Hard times indeed; *O tempora! O mores!*
I knew that stage must down where not one whore is.
But can you have the hearts though?—(Pray now speak,)
After all our services, to let us break?
You cannot do't, unless the devil's in ye,
What arts, what merit, han't we used to win ye?
First, to divert ye with some new French strollers;
We brought ye *Bona Sera's, Barba Colars.*
[*Mocking the late singers.*
When their male-throats no longer drew your money:
We got ye a eunuch's pipe, signor Rampony.
That beardless songster we could ne'er make much on;
The females found a damn'd blot in his scutcheon.
An Italian now we've got of mighty fame,
Don Sigismondo Fideli.—There's music in his name;
His voice is like the music of the spheres,
It should be heavenly for the price it bears.
[*20l. a time.*
He's a handsome fellow too, looks brisk and trim:
If he don't take ye, then the devil take him!
Besides, lest our white faces always mayn't delight ye,
We've pick'd up gipsies now to please or fright ye.
Lastly, to make our house more courtlier shine,
As travel does the men of mode refine,
So our stage-heroes did their tour design;
To mend their manners and coarse English feeding,
They went to Ireland to improve their breeding.
Yet, for all this, we still are at a loss,
Oh Collier! Collier! thou'st frighted away Miss Cross:
She, to return our foreigner's complaisance,
At Cupid's call, has made a trip to France.
Love's fire-arms here, are since not worth a souse:
We've lost the only touch-hole of our house.
Losing that jewel, gave us a fatal blow:
Well, if thin audience must Jo. Haynes undo,
Well, if 'tis decreed, nor can thy fate, O stage!
Resist the vows of this obdurate age,
I'll then grow wiser, leave off playing the fool,
And hire this playhouse for a boarding-school.
D'ye think the maids won't be in a sweet condition,
When they are under Jo. Haynes's grave tuition?
They'll have no occasion then I'm sure to play,
They'll have such comings in another way.

THE CONSTANT COUPLE;

OR,

A TRIP TO THE JUBILEE.

A Comedy.

Sive favore tuli, sive hanc ego carmine famam;
Jure tibi grates, candide lector, ago.
OVID. Trist. iv. 10.

TO THE HONOURABLE

SIR ROGER MOSTYN, BART., OF MOSTYN-HALL IN FLINTSHIRE.

SIR,—'Tis no small reflection on pieces of this nature, that panegyric is so much improved, and that dedication is grown more an art than poetry; that authors, to make their patrons more than men, make themselves less; and that persons of honour are forced to decline patronising wit, because their modesty cannot bear the gross strokes of adulation.

But give me leave to say, Sir, that I am too young an author to have learned the art of flattery; and, I hope, the same modesty which recommended this play to the world, will also reconcile my addresses to you, of whom I can say nothing but what your merits may warrant, and all that have the honour of your acquaintance will be proud to vindicate.

The greatest panegyric upon you, Sir, is the unprejudiced and bare truth of your character, the fire of youth, with the sedateness of a senator, and the modern gaiety of a fine English gentleman, with the noble solidity of the ancient Briton.

This is the character, Sir, which all men, but yourself, are proud to publish of you, and which more celebrated pens than mine should transmit to posterity.

The play has had some noble appearances to honour its representation; and to complete the success, I have presumed to prefix so noble a name to usher it into the world. A stately frontispiece is the beauty of a building. But here I must transverse Ovid:—*materia superabit opus*. I am, honourable Sir, your most devoted and humble servant,

G. FARQUHAR.

PREFACE TO THE READER.

AN affected modesty is very often the greatest vanity, and authors are sometimes prouder of their blushes than of the praises that occasioned them. I shan't therefore, like a foolish virgin, fly to be pursued, and deny what I chiefly wish for. I am very willing to acknowledge the beauties of this play, especially those of the third night, which not to be proud of were the height of impudence. Who is ashamed to value himself upon such favours, undervalues those who conferred them.

As I freely submit to the criticisms of the judicious, so I cannot call this an ill play, since the town has allowed it such success. When they have pardoned my faults 'twere very ill manners to condemn their indulgence. Some may think (my acquaintance in town being too slender to make a party for the play) that the success must be derived from the pure merits of the cause I am of another opinion: I have not been long enough in town to raise enemies against me; and the English are still kind to strangers. I am below the envy of great wits, and above the malice of little ones. I have not displeased the ladies, nor offended the clergy; both which are now pleased to say, that a comedy may be diverting without smut and profaneness.

Next to those advantages, the beauties of action gave the greatest life to the play, of which the town is so sensible, that all will join with me in commendation of the actors, and allow (without detracting from the merit of others) that the Theatre Royal affords an excellent and complete set of comedians. Mr. Wilks's performance has set him so far above competition in the part of Wildair, that none can pretend to envy the praise due to his merit. That he made the part, will appear from hence, that whenever the stage has the misfortune to lose him, Sir Harry Wildair may go to the Jubilee.

A great many quarrel at the *Trip to the Jubilee* for a misnomer: I must tell them, that perhaps there are greater trips in the play; and when I find that more exact plays have had better success, I'll talk with the critics about decorums, &c. However, if I ever commit another fault of this nature, I'll endeavour to make it more excusable.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Sir Harry Wildair, *an airy Gentleman, affecting humorous gaiety and freedom in his behaviour.*
Colonel Standard, *a disbanded Officer, brave and generous.*
Vizard, *outwardly pious, otherwise a great debauchee and villain.*
Alderman Smuggler, *an old Merchant.*
Clincher Senior, *a pert London Prentice turned Beau, and affecting travel.*
Clincher Junior, *his Brother, educated in the Country.*
Dicky, *his Man.*
Tim Errand, *a Porter.*

Lady Lurewell, *of a jilting temper, proceeding from a resentment of her wrongs from Men.*
Lady Darling, *an old Lady, Mother to* Angelica.
Angelica, *a Woman of Honour.*
Parly, *Maid to* Lady Lurewell.

Butler, Jailor, Constable, Mob, Porter's Wife, *and* Footmen.

SCENE,—London.

PROLOGUE

BY A FRIEND.

Poets will think nothing so checks their fury
As wits, cits, beaux, and women, for their jury.
Our spark's half dead to think what medley's come,
With blended judgments to pronounce his doom.
'Tis all false fear; for in a mingled pit,
Why, what your grave don thinks but dully writ,
His neighbour i'th' great wig may take for wit.
Some authors court the few, the wise, if any;
Our youth's content, if he can reach the many,
Who go with much like ends to church, and play,
Not to observe what priests or poets say;
No, no, your thoughts, like theirs, lie quite another way.
The ladies safe may smile: for here's no slander,
No smut, no lewd-tongued beau, no *double-entendre.*
'Tis true, he has a spark just come from France,
But then so far from beau—why, he talks sense!
Like coin oft carried out, but—seldom brought from thence.
There's yet a gang to whom our spark submits,
Your elbow-shaking fool, that lives by's wits,
That's only witty though, just as he lives, by fits.
Who, lion-like, through bailiffs scours away,
Hunts, in the face, a dinner all the day,
At night, with empty bowels, grumbles o'er the play.
And now the modish prentice he implores,
Who, with his master's cash, stolen out of doors,
Employs it on a brace of—honourable whores;
While their good bulky mother pleased, sits by,
Bawd regent of the bubble gallery.
Next to our mounted friends, we humbly move,
Who all your side-box tricks are much above,
And never fail to pay us—with your love.
Ah, friends! Poor Dorset garden-house is gone;
Our merry meetings there are all undone:
Quite lost to us, sure for some strange misdeeds,
That strong dog Samson's pull'd it o'er our heads,
Snaps rope like thread; but when his fortune's told him,
He'll hear perhaps of rope will one day hold him:
At least, I hope, that our good-natured town
Will find a way to pull his prizes down.
Well, that's all! Now, gentlemen, for the play,
On second thoughts, I've but two words to say;
Such as it is for your delight design'd,
Hear it, read, try, judge, and speak as you find.

ANOTHER PROLOGUE.

'Tis hard, the author of this play in view,
Should be condemn'd, purely for pleasing you:
Charged with a crime, which you, his judges, own
Was only this, that he has pleased the town.
He touch'd no poet's verse, nor doctor's bills;
No foe to B——re, yet a friend to Wills.
No reputation stabb'd by sour debate;
Nor had a hand in bankrupt Brisco's fate:
And, as an ease to's tender conscience, vows,
He's none of those that broke the t'other house:
In perfect pity to their wretched cheer,
Because his play was bad—he brought it here.
The dreadful sin of murder cries aloud;
And sure these poets ne'er can hope for good,
Who dipp'd their barbarous pens in that poor house's blood.
'Twas malice all: no malice like to theirs,
To write good plays, purpose to starve the players.
To starve by's wit, is still the poet's due,
But here are men whose wit is match'd by few;
Their wit both starves themselves and others too.
Our plays are farce, because our house is cramm'd;
Their plays all good; for what?—because they're damn'd.
Because we pleasure you, you call us tools;
And 'cause you please yourselves they call you fools.
By their good-nature, they are wits, true blue;
And men of breeding, by their respects to you.
To engage the fair, all other means being lost,
They fright the boxes with old Shakspeare's ghost;
The ladies of such spectres should take heed;
For 'twas the devil did raise that ghost indeed.
Their case is hard that such despair can show;
They've disobliged all powers above, they know;
And now must have recourse to powers below.
Let Shakspeare then lie still, ghosts do no good;
The fair are better pleased with flesh and blood.
What is't to them, to mind the ancients' taste?
But the poor folks are mad, and I'm in haste.
[*Runs off.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Park.*

Enter VIZARD *with a letter*, Footman *following*.

Viz. Angelica, send it back unopened! say you?

Foot. As you see, sir.

Viz. The pride of these virtuous women is more insufferable than the immodesty of prostitutes!—After all my encouragement, to slight me thus!

Foot. She said, sir, that imagining your morals sincere, she gave you access to her conversation; but that your late behaviour in her company has convinced her, that your love and religion are both hypocrisy, and that she believes your letter like yourself, fair on the outside, foul within; so sent it back unopened.

Viz. May obstinacy guard her beauty till wrinkles bury it! Then may desire prevail to make her curse that untimely pride her disappointed age repents!—I'll be revenged the very first opportunity.—Saw you the old lady Darling, her mother?

Foot. Yes, sir, and she was pleased to say much in your commendation.

Viz. That's my cue.—An esteem grafted in old age is hardly rooted out, years stiffen their opinions with their bodies, and old zeal is only to be cozened by young hypocrisy.—Run to the lady Lurewell's, and know of her maid whether her ladyship will be at home this evening.—[*Exit* Footman.] Her beauty is sufficient cure for Angelica's scorn. [*Pulls out a book, reads, and walks about.*

Enter Alderman SMUGGLER.

Smug. Ay, there's a pattern for the young men o'th' times!—At his meditation so early, some book of pious ejaculations, I'm sure.

Viz. [*Aside.*] This Hobbes is an excellent fellow!—[*Aloud.*] O uncle Smuggler! To find you in this end o'th' town is a miracle.

Smug. I have seen a miracle this morning indeed, cousin Vizard.

Viz. What is it, pray, sir?

Smug. A man at his devotion so near the court.—I'm very glad, boy, that you keep your sanctity untainted in this infectious place; the very air of this park is heathenish, and every man's breath I meet scents of atheism.

Viz. Surely, sir, some great concern must bring you to this unsanctified end of the town.

Smug. A very unsanctified concern truly, cousin.

Viz. What is't?

Smug. A lawsuit, boy.—shall I tell you?—My ship the Swan is newly arrived from St. Sebastian, laden with Portugal wines: now the impudent rogue of a tidewaiter has the face to affirm, 'tis French wines in Spanish casks, and has indicted me upon the statute.—O conscience! conscience! these tidewaiters and surveyors plague us more with the French wines, than the war did with French privateers.

Enter Colonel STANDARD.

Ay, there's another plague of the nation—a red coat and feather.

Viz. Colonel Standard, I'm your humble servant.

Stand. Maybe not, sir.

Viz. Why so?

Stand. Because—I'm disbanded.

Viz. How, broke!

Stand. This very morning, in Hyde Park, my brave regiment, a thousand men that looked like lions yesterday were scattered, and looked as poor aud simple as the herd of deer that grazed beside 'em.

Smug. [*Singing.*] Tal, al, deral!—I'll have a bonfire this night as high as the Monument.

Stand. A bonfire! thou dry, withered, ill nature! had not these brave fellows' swords defended you, your house had been a bonfire ere this about your ears.—Did we not venture our lives, sir?

Smug. And did not we pay you for your lives, sir?—Venture your lives! I'm sure we ventured our money, and that's life and soul to me.—Sir, we'll maintain you no longer.

Stand. Then your wives shall, old Actæon. There are five-and-thirty strapping officers gone this morning to live upon free quarter in the city.

Smug. O Lord! O Lord! I shall have a son within these nine months born with a leading staff in his hand.—Sir, you are—

Stand. What, sir?

Smug. Sir, I say that you are—

Stand. What, sir?

Smug. Disbanded, sir, that's all.—I see my lawyer yonder. [*Exit.*

Viz. Sir, I'm very sorry for your misfortune.

Stand. Why so? I don't come to borrow money of you; if you're my friend, meet me this evening at the Rummer, I'll pay my way, drink a health to my king, prosperity to my country; and away for Hungary to-morrow morning.

Viz. What! you won't leave us?

Stand. What! a soldier stay here! to look like an old pair of colours in Westminster-hall, ragged and rusty! no, no.—I met yesterday a broken lieutenant, he was ashamed to own that he wanted a dinner, but begged eighteenpence of me to buy a new sheath for his sword.

Viz. Oh! but you have good friends, colonel!

Stand. Oh, very good friends! my father's a lord, and my elder brother a beau.

Viz. But your country may perhaps want your sword again.

Stand. Nay, for that matter, let but a single drum beat up for volunteers between Ludgate and Charing Cross, and I shall undoubtedly hear it at the walls of Buda.

Viz. Come, come, colonel, there are ways of making your fortune at home.—Make your addresses to the fair, you're a man of honour and courage.

Stand. Ay, my courage is like to do me wondrous service with the fair. This pretty cross cut over my eye will attract a duchess. I warrant 'twill be a mighty grace to my ogling.—Had I used the stratagem of a certain brother colonel of mine, I might succeed.

Viz. What was it, pray?

Stand. Why, to save his pretty face for the

women, he always turned his back upon the enemy. He was a man of honour—for the ladies.

Viz. Come, come, the loves of Mars and Venus will never fail; you must get a mistress.

Stand. Prithee, no more on't.—You have awakened a thought, from which, and the kingdom, I would have stolen away at once.—To be plain, I have a mistress.

Viz. And she's cruel.

Stand. No.

Viz. Her parents prevent your happiness.

Stand. Nor that.

Viz. Then she has no fortune.

Stand. A large one; beauty to tempt all mankind, and virtue to beat off their assaults. O Vizard! such a creature!—

Enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR, *crosses the stage singing with* Footmen *after him.*

Heyday! who the devil have we here?

Viz. The joy of the playhouse, and life of the Park; Sir Harry Wildair newly come from Paris.

Stand. Sir Harry Wildair! Did not he make a campaign in Flanders some three or four years ago?

Viz. The same.

Stand. Why, he behaved himself very bravely.

Viz. Why not? dost think bravery and gaiety are inconsistent? He's a gentleman of most happy circumstances, born to a plentiful estate; has had a genteel and easy education, free from the rigidness of teachers and pedantry of schools. His florid constitution being never ruffled by misfortune, nor stinted in its pleasures, has rendered him entertaining to others, and easy to himself:—turning all passion into gaiety of humour, by which he chooses rather to rejoice his friends than be hated by any; as you shall see.

Re-enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR, Footman *attending.*

Sir Har. Ha, Vizard!

Viz. Sir Harry!

Sir Har. Who thought to find you out of the rubric so long? I thought thy hypocrisy had been wedded to a pulpit-cushion long ago.—Sir, if I mistake not your face, your name is Standard.

Stand. Sir Harry, I'm your humble servant.

Sir Har. Come, gentlemen, the news! the news o' th' town! for I'm just arrived.

Viz. Why, in the city-end o' th' town we're playing the knave, to get estates.

Stand. And in the court-end playing the fool, in spending 'em.

Sir Har. Just so in Paris; I'm glad we're grown so modish.

Viz. We are all so reformed, that gallantry is taken for vice.

Stand. And hypocrisy for religion.

Sir Har. *A la mode de Paris*, again.

Viz. Not one whore between Ludgate and Aldgate.

Stand. But ten times more cuckolds than ever.

Viz. Nothing like an oath in the city.

Stand. That's a mistake; for my major swore a hundred and fifty last night to a merchant's wife in her bedchamber.

Sir Har. Psha! this is trifling; tell me news, gentlemen, what lord has lately broke his fortune at the Groom-porter's? or his heart at Newmarket, for the loss of a race? What wife has been lately suing in Doctors' Commons for alimony? or, what daughter run away with her father's valet? What beau gave the noblest ball at the Bath, or had the finest coach in the ring? I want news, gentlemen.

Stand. Faith, sir, these are no news at all.

Viz. But pray, sir Harry, tell us some news of your travels.

Sir Har. With all my heart. You must know then, I went over to Amsterdam in a Dutch ship; I there had a Dutch whore for five stivers: I went from thence to Landen, where I was heartily drubbed in the battle with the butt-end of a Swiss musket. I thence went to Paris, where I had half-a-dozen intrigues, bought half-a-dozen new suits, fought a couple of duels, and here I am again *in statu quo.*

Viz. But we heard that you designed to make the tour of Italy; what brought you back so soon?

Sir Har. That which brought you into the world, and may perhaps carry you out of it; a woman.

Stand. What! quit the pleasures of travel for a woman!

Sir Har. Ay, colonel, for such a woman! I had rather see her *ruelle* than the palace of Louis le Grand. There's more glory in her smile than in the Jubilee at Rome; and I would rather kiss her hand than the pope's toe.

Viz. You, colonel, have been very lavish in the beauty and virtue of your mistress; and sir Harry here has been no less eloquent in the praise of his: now will I lay you both ten guineas a piece, that neither of them is so pretty, so witty, or so virtuous, as mine.

Stand. 'Tis done!

Sir Har. I'll double the stakes.—But, gentlemen, now I think on't, how shall we be resolved? for I know not where my mistress may be found; she left Paris about a month before me, and I had an account—

Stand. How, sir! left Paris about a month before you!

Sir Har. Ay, but I know not where, and perhaps mayn't find her this fortnight.

Stand. Her name, pray, sir Harry?

Viz. Ay, ay, her name; perhaps we know her.

Sir Har. Her name! Ay,—she has the softest, whitest hand that ever was made of flesh and blood, her lips so balmy sweet!

Stand. But her name, sir!

Sir Har. Then her neck and breast;—her breasts do so heave! so heave! [*Singing.*

Viz. But her name, sir, her quality!

Sir Har. Then her shape, colonel!

Stand. But her name I want, sir!

Sir Har. Then her eyes, Vizard!

Stand. Psha, sir Harry, her name or nothing!

Sir Har. Then, if you must have it, she's called the lady—But then her foot, gentlemen! she dances to a miracle.—Vizard, you have certainly lost your wager.

Viz. Why, you have lost your senses; we shall never discover the picture unless you subscribe the name.

Sir Har. Then her name is Lurewell.

Stand. 'Sdeath, my mistress! [*Aside.*

Viz. My mistress, by Jupiter! [*Aside.*

Sir Har. Do you know her, gentlemen?

Stand. I have seen her, sir.

Sir Har. Canst tell where she lodges? Tell me, dear colonel.

Stand. Your humble servant, sir. [*Exit.*

Sir Har. Nay, hold, colonel, I'll follow you, and will know. [*Runs out.*

Viz. The lady Lurewell his mistress!—He loves her, but she loves me.—But he's a baronet, and I plain Vizard; he has a coach-and-six, and I walk a-foot; I was bred in London, and he in Paris.—That very circumstance has murdered me.—Then, some stratagem must be laid to divert his pretensions.

Re-enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR.

Sir Har. Prithee, Dick, what makes the colonel so out of humour?

Viz. Because he's out of pay, I suppose.

Sir Har. 'Slife, that's true! I was beginning to mistrust some rivalship in the case.

Viz. And suppose there were, you know the colonel can fight, sir Harry.

Sir Har. Fight! psha! but he can't dance, ha! We contend for a woman, Vizard! 'Slife, man, if ladies were to be gained by sword and pistol only, what the devil should all the beaux do?

Viz. [*Aside.*] I'll try him farther.—[*Aloud.*] But would not you, sir Harry, fight for this woman you so much admire?

Sir Har. Fight!—Let me consider. I love her, that's true;—but, then, I love honest sir Harry Wildair better. The lady Lurewell is divinely charming—right—but, then, a thrust i'th' guts, or a Middlesex jury, is as ugly as the devil.

Viz. Ay, sir Harry, 'twere a dangerous cast for a beau baronet to be tried by a parcel of greasy, grumbling, bartering boobies, who would hang you purely because you're a gentleman.

Sir Har. Ay, but on t'other hand, I have money enough to bribe the rogues with: so, upon mature deliberation, I would fight for her.—But no more of her. Prithee, Vizard, can't you recommend a friend to a pretty mistress by-the-by, till I can find my own? You have store, I'm sure; you cunning poaching dogs make surer game than we that hunt open and fair. Prithee now, good Vizard!

Viz. Let me consider a little.—[*Aside.*] Now love and revenge inspire my politics.

[*Pauses, whilst* Sir HARRY WILDAIR *walks about singing.*

Sir Har. Psha! thou'rt as long studying for a new mistress as a drawer is piercing a new pipe.

Viz. I design a new pipe for you, and wholesome wine; you'll therefore bear a little expectation.

Sir Har. Ha! sayest thou, dear Vizard.

Viz. A girl of sixteen, sir Harry.

Sir Har. Now sixteen thousand blessings light on thee!

Viz. Pretty and witty.

Sir Har. Ay, ay, but her name, Vizard?

Viz. Her name! yes,—she has the softest, whitest hand that ever was made of flesh and blood, her lips so balmy sweet!

Sir Har. Well, well, but where shall I find her, man?

Viz. Find her!—but, then, her foot, sir Harry!—she dances to a miracle.

Sir Har. Prithee, don't distract me.

Viz. Well, then, you must know that this lady is the curiosity and ambition of the town; her name's Angelica. She that passes for her mother is a private bawd, and called the lady Darling; she goes for a baronet's lady, (no disparagement to your honour, sir Harry,) I assure you.

Sir Har. Psha, hang my honour! But what street, what house?

Viz. Not so fast, sir Harry; you must have my passport for your admittance, and you'll find my recommendation, in a line or two, will procure you very civil entertainment; I suppose twenty or thirty pieces handsomely placed will gain the point; I'll ensure her sound.

Sir Har. Thou dearest friend to a man in necessity!—[*To* Footman.] Here, sirrah, order my coach about to St. James's; I'll walk across the Park. [*Exit* Footman.

Enter CLINCHER Senior.

Clinch. Sen. Here, sirrah, order my coach about to St. James's, I'll walk across the Park too.—Mr. Vizard, your most devoted.—Sir, [*To* Sir HARRY WILDAIR.] I admire the mode of your shoulder-knot; methinks it hangs very emphatically, and carries an air of travel in it; your sword-knot too is most ornamentally modish, and bears a foreign mien. Gentlemen, my brother is just arrived in town, so that, being upon the wing to kiss his hands, I hope you'll pardon this abrupt departure of, gentlemen, your most devoted and most faithful, humble servant. [*Exit.*

Sir Har. Prithee, dost know him?

Viz. Know him! why, 'tis Clincher, who was apprentice to my uncle Smuggler, the merchant in the city.

Sir Har. What makes him so gay?

Viz. Why, he's in mourning for his father; the kind old man, in Hertfordshire t'other day, broke his neck a fox-hunting; the son, upon the news, has broke his indentures, whipped from behind the counter into the side-box, forswears merchandise,—where he must live by cheating,—and usurps gentility, where he may die by raking. He keeps his coach and liveries, brace of geldings, leash of mistresses, talks of nothing but wines, intrigues, plays, fashions, and going to the Jubilee.

Sir Har. Ha! ha! ha! how many pound of pulvil must the fellow use in sweetening himself from the smell of hops and tobacco? Faugh!—I'my conscience methought, like Olivia's lover, he stunk of Thames-street. But now for Angelica, that's her name.—We'll to the Princess's chocolate-house, where you shall write my passport. Allons! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Lady LUREWELL'S *House.*

Lady LUREWELL *and* PARLY.

Lady Lure. Parly, my pocket-book!—Let me see—Madrid, Venice, Paris, London.—Ay, London! They may talk what they will of the hot countries, but I find love most fruitful under this climate.—In a month's space, have I gained—let me see, *imprimis*, colonel Standard.

Par. And how will your ladyship manage him?

Lady Lure. As all soldiers should be managed, he shall serve me till I gain my ends, then I disband him.

Par. But he loves you, madam.

Lady Lure. Therefore I scorn him, I hate all

that don't love me, and slight all that do. Would his whole deluding sex admired me, thus would I slight them all! My virgin and unwary innocence was wronged by faithless man, but now glance eyes, plot brain, dissemble face, lie tongue, and be a second Eve to tempt, seduce, and damn the treacherous kind.—Let me survey my captives.—The Colonel leads the van; next Mr. Vizard, he courts me, out of the *Practice of Piety*, therefore is a hypocrite; then Clincher he adores me with orangery, and is consequently a fool; then my old merchant, Alderman Smuggler, he's a compound of both; out of which medley of lovers, if I don't make good diversion—what d'ye think, Parly?

Par. I think, madam, I'm like to be very virtuous in your service, if you teach me all those tricks that you use to your lovers.

Lady Lure. You're a fool, child; observe this that though a woman swear, forswear, lie, dissemble, backbite, be proud, vain, malicious, anything, if she secures the main chance, she's still virtuous; that's a maxim.

Par. I can't be persuaded though, madam, but that you really loved sir Harry Wildair in Paris.

Lady Lure. Of all the lovers I ever had, he was my greatest plague, for I could never make him uneasy; I left him involved in a duel upon my account; I long to know whether the fop be killed or not.

Enter Colonel STANDARD.

O Lord! no sooner talk of killing, but the soldier is conjured up. You're upon hard duty, colonel, to serve your king, your country and a mistress too.

Stand. The latter, I must confess, is the harder; for in war, madam, we can be relieved in our duty: but in love who would take our post is our enemy; emulation in glory is transporting, but rivals here intolerable.

Lady Lure. Those that bear away the prize in the field, should boast the same success in the bed-chamber; and I think, considering the weakness of our sex, we should make those our companions who can be our champions.

Stand. I once, madam, hoped the honour of defending you from all injuries through a title to your lovely person, but now my love must attend my fortune. This commission, madam, was my passport to the fair; adding a nobleness to my passion, it stamped a value on my love; 'twas once the life of honour, but now its hearse, and with it must my love be buried.

Par. What! disbanded, colonel?

Stand. Yes, Mrs. Parly.

Par. Faugh, the nauseous fellow! he stinks of poverty already. [*Aside.*

Lady Lure. His misfortune troubles me, 'cause it may prevent my designs. [*Aside.*

Stand. I'll choose, madam, rather to destroy my passion by absence abroad, than have it starved at home.

Lady Lure. I'm sorry, sir, you have so mean an opinion of my affection, as to imagine it founded upon your fortune. And to convince you of your mistake, here I vow by all that's sacred, I own the same affection now as before. Let it suffice, my fortune is considerable.

Stand. No, madam, no; I'll never be a charge to her I love. The man that sells himself for gold is the worst of prostitutes.

Lady Lure. Now were he any other creature but a man, I could love him. [*Aside.*

Stand. This only last request I make, that no title recommend a fool, office introduce a knave, nor a coat a coward to my place in your affections; so farewell my country! and adieu my love! [*Exit.*

Lady Lure. Now the devil take thee for being so honourable!—Here Parly, call him back.—[*Exit* PARLY] I shall lose half my diversion else.

Re-enter PARLY *with* Colonel STANDARD.

Now for a trial of skill.—Sir, I hope you'll pardon my curiosity; when do you take your journey?

Stand. To-morrow morning, early, madam.

Lady Lure. So suddenly! which way are you designed to travel?

Stand. That I can't yet resolve on.

Lady Lure. Pray, sir, tell me, pray sir; I entreat you, why are you so obstinate?

Stand. Why are you so curious, madam?

Lady Lure. Because—

Stand. What?

Lady Lure. Because, I—I.

Stand. Because what, madam? pray tell me.

Lady Lure. Because I design to follow you. [*Crying.*

Stand. Follow me! by all that's great, I ne'er was proud before, but love from such a creature might swell the vanity of the proudest prince. Follow me! By Heavens, thou shalt not. What! expose thee to the hazards of a camp!—Rather I'll stay and here bear the contempt of fools, and worst of fortune.

Lady Lure. You need not, shall not; my estate for both is sufficient.

Stand. Thy estate! no, I'll turn a knave and purchase one myself; I'll cringe to that proud man I undermine, and fawn on him that I would bite to death; I'll tip my tongue with flattery, and smooth my face with smiles; I'll turn pimp, informer, office-broker, nay coward, to be great; and sacrifice it all to thee, my generous fair.

Lady Lure. And I'll dissemble, lie, swear, jilt, anything but I'd reward thy love, and recompense thy noble passion.

Stand. Sir Harry, ha! ha! ha! poor Sir Harry, ha! ha! ha! Rather kiss her hand than the Pope's toe, ha! ha! ha!

Lady Lure. What sir Harry, colonel, what sir Harry!

Stand. Sir Harry Wildair, madam.

Lady Lure. What! is he come over?

Stand. Ay, and he told me—but I don't believe a syllable on't.

Lady Lure. What did he tell you?

Stand. Only called you his mistress, and pretending to be extravagant in your commendation, would vainly insinuate the praise of his own judgment and good fortune in a choice—

Lady Lure. How easily is the vanity of fops tickled by our sex!

Stand. Why, your sex is the vanity of fops.

Lady Lure. O' my conscience, I believe so. This gentleman, because he danced well, I pitched on for a partner at a ball in Paris, and ever since he has so persecuted me with letters, songs, dances, serenading, flattery, foppery, and noise, that I was forced to fly the kingdom.—And I warrant you he made you jealous?

Stand. Faith, madam, I was a little uneasy.

Lady Lure. You shall have a plentiful revenge,

I'll send him back all his foolish letters, songs, and verses, and you yourself shall carry 'em; 'twill afford you opportunity of triumphing, and free me from his farther impertinence; for of all men he's my aversion.—I'll run and fetch them instantly.

Stand. Dear madam, a rare project!—[*Exit* Lady LUREWELL.] How I shall bait him like Actæon, with his own dogs!—Well, Mrs. Parly, 'tis ordered by act of Parliament, that you receive no more pieces, Mrs. Parly.—

Par. 'Tis provided by the same act, that you send no more messages by me, good colonel; you must not pretend to send any more letters, unless you can pay the postage.

Stand. Come, come, don't be mercenary; take example by your lady, be honourable.

Par. A lack a day, sir! it shows as ridiculous and haughty for us to imitate our betters in their honour as in their finery; leave honour to nobility that can support it; we poor folks, colonel, have no pretence to't; and truly, I think, sir, that your honour should be cashiered with your leading-staff.

Stand. 'Tis one of the greatest curses of poverty to be the jest of chambermaids! [*Aside.*

Re-enter Lady LUREWELL.

Lady Lure. Here's the packet, colonel; the whole magazine of love's artillery. [*Gives him a packet.*

Stand. Which since I have gained I will turn upon the enemy; madam, I'll bring you the news of my victory this evening.—Poor sir Harry, ha! ha! ha! [*Exit.*

Lady Lure. To the right about as you were; march, colonel! ha! ha! ha!

Vain man, who boasts of studied parts and wiles,
Nature in us your deepest art beguiles,
Stamping deep cunning in our frowns and smiles.
You toil for art, your intellects you trace;
Woman, without a thought, bears policy in her face. [*Exit,* PARLY *following.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—CLINCHER Junior's *Lodgings.*

Enter CLINCHER Junior, *opening a letter,* DICKY *following.*

Clinch. Jun. [Reads.]

Dear Brother,

I will see you presently; I have sent this lad to wait on you, he can instruct you in the fashions of the town; I am your affectionate brother,

CLINCHER.

Very well, and what's your name, sir?

Dicky. My name is Dicky, sir.

Clinch. Jun. Dicky!

Dicky. Ay, Dicky, sir.

Clinch. Jun. Very well, a pretty name! And what can you do, Mr. Dicky?

Dicky. Why, sir, I can powder a wig, and pick up a whore.

Clinch. Jun. O Lord! O Lord!—a whore! why are there many whores in this town?

Dicky. Ha! ha! ha! many whores? there's a question indeed! Why, sir, there are above five hundred surgeons in town. Hark'ee, sir, do you see that woman there in the velvet scarf, and red knots?

Clinch. Jun. Ay, sir; what then?

Dicky. Why, she shall be at your service in three minutes, as I'm a pimp.

Clinch. Jun. O Jupiter Ammon! why, she's a gentlewoman.

Dicky. A gentlewoman! why, so are all the whores in town, sir.

Enter CLINCHER Senior.

Clinch. Sen. Brother, you're welcome to London.

Clinch. Jun. I thought, brother, you owed so much to the memory of my father as to wear mourning for his death.

Clinch. Sen. Why, so I do, fool, I wear this because I have the estate, and you wear that because you have not the estate: you have cause to mourn indeed, brother. Well, brother, I'm glad to see you, fare you well! [*Going.*

Clinch. Jun. Stay, stay brother, where are you going?

Clinch. Sen. How natural 'tis for a country booby to ask impertinent questions!—Hark'ee, sir, is not my father dead?

Clinch. Jun. Ay, ay, to my sorrow.

Clinch. Sen. No matter for that, he's dead, and am not I a young powdered extravagant English heir?

Clinch. Jun. Very right, sir.

Clinch. Sen. Why, then, sir, you may be sure that I am going to the Jubilee, sir.

Clinch. Jun. Jubilee! what's that?

Clinch. Sen. Jubilee! why the Jubilee is—faith, I don't know what it is.

Dicky. Why, the Jubilee is the same thing with our lord-mayor's day in the city! there will be pageants, and squibs, and raree-shows, and all that, sir.

Clinch. Jun. And must you go so soon, brother?

Clinch. Sen. Yes, sir, for I must stay a month in Amsterdam, to study poetry.

Clinch. Jun. Then, I suppose, brother, you travel through Muscovy to learn fashions, don't you, brother?

Clinch. Sen. Brother!—Prithee, Robin, don't call me brother; sir will do every jot as well.

Clinch. Jun. O Jupiter Ammon! why so?

Clinch. Sen. Because people will imagine that you have a spite at me.—But have you seen your cousin Angelica yet, and her mother the lady Darling?

Clinch. Jun. No, my dancing-master has not been with me yet. How shall I salute them, brother?

Clinch. Sen. Psha! that's easy; 'tis only two scrapes, a kiss, and your humble servant; I'll tell you more when I come from the Jubilee. Come along. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Lady DARLING'S *House.*

Enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR, *with a letter.*

Sir Har. *Like light and heat incorporate we lay,*
We bless'd the night and cursed the coming day.

Well, if this paper-kite flies sure, I'm secure of my game—humph! The prettiest bordel I have seen; a very stately genteel one—[Footmen *cross the stage.*] Heyday! equipage too! Now for a bawd by the courtesy, and a whore with a coat of arms.—'Sdeath, I'm afraid I have mistaken the house!

Enter Lady DARLING.

No, this must be the bawd by her bulk.

Lady Dar. Your business, pray, sir?

Sir Har. Pleasure, madam.

Lady Dar. Then, sir, you have no business here.

Sir Har. This letter, madam, will inform you farther; Mr. Vizard sent it, with his humble service to your ladyship.

Lady Dar. How does my cousin, sir?

Sir Har. Ay, her cousin too:—that's right procuress again. [*Aside.*

Lady Dar. [Reads.] *Madam—earnest inclination to serve—Sir Harry—madam—court my cousin—gentleman—fortune—your ladyship's most humble servant,*—VIZARD.
Sir, your fortune and quality are sufficient to recommend you anywhere; but what goes farther with me, is the recommendation of so sober and pious a young gentleman as my cousin Vizard.

Sir Har. A right sanctified bawd, o' my word! [*Aside.*

Lady Dar. Sir Harry, your conversation with Mr. Vizard argues you a gentleman, free from the loose and vicious carriage of the town; I'll therefore call my daughter. [*Exit.*

Sir Har. Now go thy way for an illustrious bawd of Babylon!—She dresses up a sin so religiously, that the devil would hardly know it of his making.

Re-enter Lady DARLING *with* ANGELICA.

Lady Dar. [*Aside to* ANGELICA.] Pray, daughter, use him civilly, such matches won't offer every day. [*Exit.*

Sir Har. O all ye powers of love! an angel! 'Sdeath, what money have I got in my pocket? I can't offer her less than twenty guineas—and, by Jupiter, she's worth a hundred! [*Aside.*

Angel. 'Tis he! the very same? and his person as agreeable as his character of good-humour.—Pray Heaven his silence proceed from respect. [*Aside.*

Sir Har. How innocent she looks! How would that modesty adorn virtue, when it makes even vice look so charming!—By Heaven there's such a commanding innocence in her looks that I dare not ask the question. [*Aside.*

Angel. Now all the charms of real love and feigned indifference assist me to engage his heart, for mine is lost already. [*Aside.*

Sir Har. Madam—I, I—[*Aside.*] Zoons! I cannot speak to her.—But she's a whore, and I will.—[*Aloud.*] Madam, in short, I, I—[*Aside.*] O hypocrisy, hypocrisy! what a charming sin art thou!

Angel. [*Aside.*] He is caught; now to secure my conquest.—[*Aloud.*] I thought, sir, you had business to impart?

Sir Har. [*Aside.*] Business to impart! how nicely she words it!—[*Aloud.*] Yes, madam; don't you, don't you love singing birds, madam?

Angel. [*Aside.*] That's an odd question for a lover.—[*Aloud.*] Yes, sir.

Sir Har. Why, then, madam, here is a nest of the prettiest goldfinches that ever chirped in a cage; twenty young ones, I assure you, madam.

Angel. Twenty young ones! what then, sir?

Sir Har. Why, then, madam, there are twenty young ones.—'Slife, I think twenty is pretty fair.

Angel. [*Aside.*] He's mad, sure!—[*Aloud.*] Sir Harry, when you have learned more wit and manners you shall be welcome here again. [*Exit.*

Sir Har. Wit and manners! Egad, now I conceive there is a great deal of wit and manners in twenty guineas.—I'm sure 'tis all the wit and manners I have about me at present. What shall I do?

Enter CLINCHER Junior *and* DICKY.

What the devil's here? Another cousin I warrant ye!—Hark'ee, sir, can you lend me ten or a dozen guineas instantly? I'll pay you fifteen for them in three hours, upon my honour.

Clinch. Jun. [*Aside to* DICKY.] These London sparks are plaguy impudent! This fellow, by his wig and assurance, can be no less than a courtier.

Dicky. He's rather a courtier by his borrowing.

Clinch. Jun. Faith, sir, I han't above five guineas about me.

Sir Har. What business have you here then, sir? For to my knowledge twenty won't be sufficient.

Clinch. Jun. Sufficient! for what, sir?

Sir Har. What, sir! why, for that, sir; what the devil should it be, sir! I know your business notwithstanding all your gravity, sir.

Clinch. Jun. My business! why, my cousin lives here.

Sir Har. I know your cousin does live there, and Vizard's cousin, and—my cousin, and everybody's cousin.—Hark'ee, sir, I shall return immediately, and if you offer to touch her till I come back, I shall cut your throat, rascal! [*Exit.*

Clinch. Jun. Why, the man's mad, sure!

Dicky. Mad, sir! ay. Why, he's a beau!

Clinch. Jun. A beau! what's that? Are all madmen beaux?

Dicky. No, sir; but most beaux are madmen.—But now for your cousin. Remember your three scrapes, a kiss, and your humble servant.

[*Exeunt, as into the house.*

SCENE III.—*A Street.*

Enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR, Colonel STANDARD *following.*

Stand. Sir Harry! Sir Harry!

Sir Har. I'm in haste, colonel; besides, if you're in no better humour than when I parted with you in the Park this morning, your company won't be very agreeable.

Stand. You're a happy man, sir Harry, who

are never out of humour. Can nothing move your gall, sir Harry?

Sir Har. Nothing but impossibilities, which are the same as nothing.

Stand. What impossibilities?

Sir Har. The resurrection of my father to disinherit me, or an act of parliament against wenching. A man of eight thousand pounds per annum to be vexed!—No, no; anger and spleen are companions for younger brothers.

Stand. Suppose one called you son of a whore behind your back?

Sir Har. Why, then would I call him rascal behind his back, and so we're even.

Stand. But suppose you had lost a mistress?

Sir Har. Why, then would I get another.

Stand. But suppose you were discarded by the woman you love, that would surely trouble you?

Sir Har. You're mistaken, colonel; my love is neither romantically honourable, nor meanly mercenary—'tis only a pitch of gratitude: while she loves me, I love her; when she desists, the obligation's void.

Stand. But to be mistaken in your opinion, sir; if the lady Lurewell (only suppose it) had discarded you; I say, only suppose it—and had sent your discharge by me!

Sir Har. Psha! that's another impossibility.

Stand. Are you sure of that?

Sir Har. Why, 'twere a solecism in nature!—we're finger and thumb, sir. She dances with me, sings with me, plays with me, swears with me, lies with me!

Stand. How, sir?

Sir Har. I mean in an honourable way; that is, she lies for me.—In short, we are as like one another as a couple of guineas!

Stand. Now that I have raised you to the highest pinnacle of vanity, will I give you so mortifying a fall as shall dash your hopes to pieces!—I pray your honour to peruse these papers.

[*Gives him the packet.*

Sir Har. What, is't the muster-roll of your regiment, colonel?

Stand. No, no, 'tis a list of your forces in your last love campaign; and, for your comfort, all disbanded!

Sir Har. Prithee, good metaphorical colonel, what d'ye mean?

Stand. Read, sir, read! these are the sibyl's leaves that will unfold your destiny.

Sir Har. So it be not a false deed to cheat me of my estate, what care I!—[*Opening the packet.*] Humph! my hand!—*To the lady Lurewell!—To the lady Lurewell!—To the lady Lurewell!*—What devil hast thou been tampering with to conjure up these spirits?

Stand. A certain familiar of your acquaintance, sir.

Sir Har. [Reading.] *Madam, my passion—so natural—your beauty contending—force of charms—mankind—eternal admirer*, WILDAIR!—I never was ashamed of my name before!

Stand. What, sir Harry Wildair out of humour! ha! ha! ha!—Poor sir Harry! more glory in her smile than in the Jubilee at Rome! ha! ha! ha!—But then her foot, sir Harry! she dances to a miracle! ha! ha! ha!—Fy, sir Harry! a man of your parts write letters not worth a keeping!—What sayest thou, my dear knight-errant? ha! ha! ha!—You may go seek adventures now indeed!

Sir Har. No, no!—[*Sings.*] Let her wander, &c.

Stand. You are jilted to some tune, sir! blown up with false music, that's all!

Sir Har. Now, why should I be angry that a woman is a woman? Since inconstancy and falsehood are grounded in their natures, how can they help it?

Stand. Then they must be grounded in your nature; for you and she are finger and thumb, sir!

Sir Har. Here's a copy of verses too; I must turn poet in the devil's name!—[*Aside.*] Stay!—'sdeath, what's here? This is her hand.—Oh, the charming characters!—[Reading.] *My dear Wildair,*—That's I;—*this huff bluff colonel*—that's he,—*is the rarest fool in nature,*—the devil he is!—*and as such have I used him;*—with all my heart, faith!—*I had no better way of letting you know that I lodge in Pall-Mall, near the Holy Lamb.*—[*Aloud.*] Colonel, I'm your most humble servant.

Stand. Hold, sir! you shan't go yet; I han't delivered half my message.

Sir Har. Upon my faith, but you have, colonel!

Stand. Well, well, own your spleen; out with it: I know you're like to burst.

Sir Har. I am so, by Gad, ha! ha! ha!

Stand. Ay, with all my heart, ha! ha! ha!—[*Laugh and point at one another.*] Well, well, that's all forced, sir Harry.

Sir Har. I was never better pleased in all my life, by Jupiter!

Stand. Well, sir Harry, 'tis prudence to hide your concern when there's no help for't.—But to be serious now, the lady has sent you back all your papers there. I was so just as not to look upon 'em.

Sir Har. I'm glad on't, sir; for there were some things that I would not have you see.

Stand. All this she has done for my sake, and I desire you would decline any farther pretensions for your own sake. So, honest, good-natured sir Harry, I'm your humble servant. [*Exit.*

Sir Har. Ha! ha! ha! poor colonel!—Oh, the delight of an ingenious mistress! what a life and briskness it adds to an amour! like the loves of mighty Jove, still suing in different shapes. A legerdemain mistress, who, *Presto! pass!* and she's vanished, then *Hey!* in an instant in your arms again. [*Going.*

Enter VIZARD.

Viz. Well met, sir Harry; what news from the island of Love?

Sir Har. Faith, we made but a broken voyage by your card; but now I am bound for another port: I told you the colonel was my rival.

Viz. The colonel! cursed misfortune! another!

[*Aside.*

Sir Har. But the civillest in the world; he brought me word where my mistress lodges. The story's too long to tell you now, for I must fly.

Viz. What! have you given over all thoughts of Angelica?

Sir Har. No, no, I'll think of her some other time. But now for the lady Lurewell; wit and beauty calls.

That mistress ne'er can pall her lover's joys,
Who's wit can whet whene'er her beauty cloys.

Her little amorous frauds all truth excel,
And make us happy, being deceived so well.
[*Exit.*

Viz. The colonel, my rival too! how shall I manage? There is but one way: him and the knight will I set a tilting, where one cuts t'other's throat, and the survivor's hanged. So there will be two rivals pretty decently disposed of. Since honour may oblige them to play the fool, why should not necessity engage me to play the knave? [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*A Room in* Lady Lurewell's *House.*

Lady Lurewell *and* Parly.

Lady Lure. Has my servant brought me the money from my merchant?

Par. No, madam, he met alderman Smuggler at Charing-cross, who has promised to wait on you himself immediately.

Lady Lure. 'Tis odd that this old rogue should pretend to love me, and at the same time cheat me of my money.

Par. 'Tis well, madam, if he don't cheat you of your estate; for you say the writings are in his hands.

Lady Lure. But what satisfaction can I get of him?—

Enter Alderman Smuggler.

Mr. Alderman, your servant; have you brought me any money, sir?

Smug. Faith, madam, trading is very dead; what with paying the taxes, raising the customs, losses at sea abroad, and maintaining our wives at home, the bank is reduced very low.

Lady Lure. Come, come, sir, these evasions won't serve your turn; I must have money, sir;—I hope you don't design to cheat me.

Smug. Cheat you, madam! have a care what you say: I'm an alderman, madam. Cheat you, madam! I have been an honest citizen these five-and-thirty years!

Lady Lure. An honest citizen! bear witness, Parly! I shall trap him in more lies presently.—Come, sir, though I am a woman I can take a course.

Smug. What course, madam? You'll go to law, will ye? I can maintain a suit of law, be it right or wrong, these forty years, I'm sure of that, thanks to the honest practice of the courts.

Lady Lure. Sir, I'll blast your reputation, and so ruin your credit.

Smug. Blast my reputation! he! he! he!—Why, I'm a religious man, madam! I have been very instrumental in the reformation of manners. Ruin my credit! ah, poor woman. There is but one way, madam. You have a sweet leering eye!

Lady Lure. You instrumental in the reformation! how?

Smug. I whipped all the whores, cut and long tail, out of the parish.—Ah! that leering eye!—Then I voted for pulling down the playhouse.—Ah, that ogle! that ogle!—Then my own pious example.—Ah, that lip! that lip!

Lady Lure. Here's a religious rogue for you now! As I hope to be saved, I have a good mind to beat the old monster. [*Aside to* Parly.

Smug. Madam, I have brought you about a hundred and fifty guineas, (a great deal of money as times go,) and—

Lady Lure. Come, give it me.

Smug. Ah that hand! that hand! that pretty, soft, white—I have brought it, you see; but the condition of the obligation is such, that whereas that leering eye, that pouting lip, that pretty soft hand, that—you understand me; you understand, I'm sure you do, you little rogue—

Lady Lure. [*Aside to* Parly.] Here's a villain now, so covetous, that he won't wench upon his own cost, but would bribe me with my own money! I will be revenged.—[*Aloud.*] Upon my word, Mr. Alderman, you make me blush; what d'ye mean, pray?

Smug. See here, madam.—[*Puts a piece of money in his mouth.*] Buss and guinea, buss and guinea, buss and guinea!

Lady Lure. Well, Mr. Alderman, you have such pretty yellow teeth, and green gums, that I will, ha! ha! ha!

Smug. Will you indeed? he! he! he! my little cocket; and when? and where? and how?

Lady Lure. 'Twill be a difficult point, sir, to secure both our honours; you must therefore be disguised, Mr. Alderman.

Smug. Psha! no matter, I am an old fornicator, I'm not half so religious as I seem to be. You little rogue; why, I'm disguised as I am; our sanctity is all outside, all hypocrisy.

Lady Lure. No man is seen to come into this house after nightfall; you must therefore sneak in when 'tis dark, in woman's clothes.

Smug. Egad so! cod so!—I have a suit a purpose, my little cocket; I love to be disguised; ecod, I make a very handsome woman, ecod I do!

Enter Footman, *whispers* Lady Lurewell.

Lady Lure. Oh! Mr. Alderman, shall I beg you to walk into the next room? here are some strangers coming up.

Smug. Buss and guinea first; ah, my little cocket! [*Exit with* Footman.

Enter Sir Harry Wildair, Footman *attending.*

Sir Har. *My life, my soul, my all that heaven can give!*

Lady Lure. *Death's life with thee, without thee death to live.*

Welcome, my dear sir Harry, I see you got my directions.

Sir Har. Directions! in the most charming manner, thou dear Machiavel of intrigue!

Lady Lure. Still brisk and airy, I find, sir Harry.

Sir Har. The sight of you, madam, exalts my air, and makes joy lighten in my face.

Lady Lure. I have a thousand questions to ask you, sir Harry; how d'ye like France?

Sir Har. *Ah! est le plus beau pays du monde.*

Lady Lure. Then what made you leave it so soon?

Sir Har. *Madame, vous voyez que je vous suis partout.*

Lady Lure. *O monsieur, je vous suis fort obligée.*—But where's the court now?

Sir Har. At Marli, madam.

Lady Lure. And where my count Le Valier?

Sir Har. His body's in the church of Notre Dame; I don't know where his soul is.

Lady Lure. What disease did he die of?

Sir Har. A duel, madam; I was his doctor.

Lady Lure. How d'ye mean?

Sir Har. As most doctors do, I killed him.

Lady Lure. *En chevalier*, my dear knight-errant? well, and how? And how, what intrigues, what gallantries are carrying on in the *beau-monde*?

Sir Har. I should ask you that question, madam, since your ladyship makes the *beau-monde* wherever you come.

Lady Lure. Ah, sir Harry! I've been almost ruined, pestered to death here, by the incessant attacks of a mighty colonel; he has besieged me as close as our army did Namur.

Sir Har. I hope your ladyship did not surrender though?

Lady Lure. No, no, but was forced to capitulate; but since you are come to raise the siege, we'll dance, and sing, and laugh.

Sir Har. And love and kiss.—*Montrez-moi votre chambre.*

Lady Lure. *Attende, attende, un peu.*—I remember, sir Harry, you promised me in Paris never to ask that impertinent question again.

Sir Har. Psha, madam! that was above two months ago; besides, madam, treaties made in France are never kept.

Lady Lure. Would you marry me, sir Harry?

Sir Har. Oh!—*Le mariage est un grand mal*—but I will marry you.

Lady Lure. Your word, sir, is not to be relied on: if a gentleman will forfeit his honour in dealings of business, we may reasonably suspect his fidelity in an amour.

Sir Har. My honour in dealings of business! why, madam, I never had any business in all my life.

Lady Lure. Yes, sir Harry, I have heard a very odd story, and am sorry that a gentleman of your figure should undergo the scandal.

Sir Har. Out with it, madam.

Lady Lure. Why, the merchant, sir, that transmitted your bills of exchange to you in France, complains of some indirect and dishonourable dealings.

Sir Har. Who, old Smuggler!

Lady Lure. Ay, ay, you know him, I find.

Sir Har. I have no less than reason, I think; why the rogue has cheated me of above five hundred pound within these three years.

Lady Lure. 'Tis your business then to acquit yourself publicly; for he spreads the scandal everywhere.

Sir Har. Acquit myself publicly!—[*To Footman.*] Here, sirrah, my coach; I'll drive instantly into the city, and cane the old villain round the Royal Exchange; he shall run the gauntlet through a thousand brush-beavers and formal cravats.

Lady Lure. Why, he is in the house now, sir.

Sir Har. What, in this house?

Lady Lure. Ay, in the next room.

Sir Har. Then, sirrah, lend me your cudgel.

Lady Lure. Sir Harry, you won't raise a disturbance in my house?

Sir Har. Disturbance, madam! no, no, I'll beat him with the temper of a philosopher.—Here, Mrs. Parly, show me the gentleman.

[*Exit with* PARLY *and* Footman.

Lady Lure. Now shall I get the old monster well beaten, and Sir Harry pestered next term with bloodsheds, batteries, costs and damages, solicitors and attorneys; and if they don't tease him out of his good humour, I'll never plot again. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.—*Another Room in the same.*

ALDERMAN SMUGGLER *discovered alone.*

Smug. Oh, this damned tidewaiter! A ship and cargo worth five thousand pound! why, 'tis richly worth five hundred perjuries.

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR.

Sir Har. Dear Mr. Alderman, I'm your most devoted and humble servant.

Smug. My best friend, sir Harry, you're welcome to England.

Sir Har. I'll assure you, sir, there's not a man in the king's dominions I'm gladder to meet.

Smug. O Lord, sir, you travellers have the most obliging ways with you!

Sir Har. There is a business, Mr. Alderman, fallen out, which you may oblige me infinitely by—I am very sorry that I am forced to be troublesome; but necessity, Mr. Alderman.

Smug. Ay, sir, as you say, necessity—but upon my word, sir, I am very short of money, at present, but—

Sir Har. That's not the matter, sir, I'm above an obligation that way; but the business is, I am reduced to an indispensable necessity of being obliged to you for a beating. Here, take this cudgel.

Smug. A beating, sir Harry! ha! ha! ha! I beat a knight baronet! an alderman turned cudgel-player! ha! ha! ha!

Sir Har. Upon my word, sir, you must beat me, or I cudgel you; take your choice.

Smug. Psha, psha, you jest!

Sir Har. Nay, 'tis as sure as fate: so, alderman, I hope you'll pardon my curiosity. [*Strikes him.*

Smug. Curiosity! deuse take your curiosity, sir! what dy'e mean?

Sir Har. Nothing at all: I'm but in jest, sir.

Smug. Oh, I can take anything in jest; but a man might imagine by the smartness of the stroke that you were in downright earnest.

Sir Har. Not in the least, sir;—[*Strikes him*] not in the least, indeed, sir!

Smug. Pray, good sir, no more of your jests: for they are the bluntest jests that I ever knew.

Sir Har. [*Strikes.*] I heartily beg your pardon, with all my heart, sir.

Smug. Pardon, sir! well, sir, that is satisfaction enough from a gentleman; but seriously now, if you pass any more of your jests upon me, I shall grow angry.

Sir Har. I humbly beg your permission to break one or two more. [*Striking him.*

Smug. O Lord, sir, you'll break my bones! Are you mad, sir? Murder! felony! manslaughter!

[SIR HARRY *knocks him down.*

Sir Har. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons! but I am absolutely compelled to't, upon my honour, sir, nothing can be more averse to my inclinations, than to jest with my honest, dear, loving, obliging friend, the alderman.

[*Striking him all this while,* SMUGGLER *tumbles over and over, and shakes out his pocket-book on the floor.*

Enter LADY LUREWELL.

Lady Lure. [*Aside.*] The old rogue's pocket-book; this may be of use.—[*Takes it up.*] O Lord, sir Harry's murdering the poor old man!

Smug. O dear, madam, I was beaten in jest, till I am murdered in good earnest.

Lady Lure. Well, well, I'll bring you off.—[*To* Sir HARRY] *Seigneur*, *frappez*, *frappez!*

Smug. Oh, for charity's sake, madam, rescue a poor citizen!

Lady Lure. Oh, you barbarous man! hold, hold!—*Frappez plus rudement*, *frappez!*—I wonder you are not ashamed!—[*Holding* Sir HARRY.] A poor reverend honest elder!—[*Helps* SMUGGLER *up.*] It makes me weep to see him in this condition, poor man!—Now the devil take you, sir Harry—for not beating him harder!—[*To* SMUGGLER.] Well, my dear, you shall come at night, and I'll make you amends!

[*Here* Sir HARRY *takes snush.*

Smug. Madam, I will have amends before I leave the place.—Sir, how durst you use me thus?

Sir Har. Sir!

Smug. Sir, I say that I will have satisfaction!

Sir Har. With all my heart!

[*Throws snush into his eyes.*

Smug. Oh, murder! blindness! fire!—Oh, madam! madam! get me some water! water! fire! fire! water! [*Exit with* LADY LUREWELL.

Sir Har. How pleasant is resenting an injury without passion! 'tis the beauty of revenge!

Let statesmen plot, and under business groan,
And settling public quiet lose their own;
Let soldiers drudge and fight for pay or fame,
For when they're shot, I think 'tis much the same.
Let scholars vex their brains with mood and tense,
And mad with strength of reason, fools commence,
Losing their wits in searching after sense;
Their *summum bonum* they must toil to gain,
And seeking pleasure, spend their life in pain.
I make the most of life, no hour misspend,
Pleasure's the means, and pleasure is my end.
No spleen, no trouble, shall my time destroy;
Life's but a span, I'll every inch enjoy. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter Colonel STANDARD *and* VIZARD.

Stand. I bring him word where she lodged! I, the civilest rival in the world!—'tis impossible!

Viz. I shall urge it no farther, sir. I only thought, sir, that my character in the world might add authority to my words, without so many repetitions.

Stand. Pardon me, dear Vizard; our belief struggles hard, before it can be brought to yield to the disadvantage of what we love: 'tis so great an abuse to our judgment, that it makes the faults of our choice our own failing.—But what said sir Harry?

Viz. He pitied the poor credulous colonel; laughed heartily; flew away with all the raptures of a bridegroom, repeating these lines:—

A mistress ne'er can pall her lover's joys,
Whose wit can whet whene'er her beauty cloys.

Stand. A mistress ne'er can pall!—by all my wrongs, he whores her! and I'm made their property. Vengeance!—Vizard, you must carry a note for me to sir Harry.

Viz. What! a challenge! I hope you don't design to fight?

Stand. What! wear the livery of my king, and pocket an affront!—'Twere an abuse to his sacred majesty! a soldier's sword, Vizard, should start of itself to redress its master's wrong!

Viz. However, sir, I think it not proper for me to carry any such message between friends.

Stand. I have ne'er a servant here, what shall I do?

Viz. There's Tim Errand, the porter, that plies at the Blue Posts, and who knows sir Harry and his haunts very well; you may send a note by him.

Stand. Here! you, friend. [*Calls.*

Viz. I have now some business, and must take my leave; I would advise you, nevertheless, against this affair.

Stand. No whispering now, nor telling of friends to prevent us. He that disappoints a man of an honourable revenge, may love him foolishly like a wife, but never value him as a friend.

Viz. Nay, the devil take him that parts you, say I! [*Exit.*

Enter TIM ERRAND, *running.*

Tim. Did your honour call a porter?

Stand. Is your name Tim Errand?

Tim. People call me so, an't like your worship.

Stand. D'ye know sir Harry Wildair?

Tim. Ay, very well, sir; he's one of my masters; many a round half-crown have I had of his worship; he's newly come home from France, sir.

Stand. Go to the next coffee-house, and wait for me.—[*Exit* TIM ERRAND.] O woman! woman! How blest is man when favour'd by your smiles! And how accursed when all those smiles are found But wanton baits to soothe us to destruction!

Thus our chief joys with base allays are curst,
And our best things, when once corrupted, worst.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The same.*

Enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR, *and* CLINCHER Senior *following.*

Clinch. Sen. Sir, sir, sir! having some business of importance to communicate to you, I would beg your attention to a trifling affair that I would impart to you.

Sir Har. What is your trifling business of importance, pray sweet sir?

Clinch. Sen. Pray, sir, are the roads deep between this and Paris?

Sir Har. Why that question, sir?

Clinch. Sen. Because I design to go to the Jubilee, sir. I understand that you are a traveller, sir; there is an air of travel in the tie of your cravat, sir, there is indeed, sir.—I suppose, sir, you bought this lace in Flanders?

Sir Har. No, sir; this lace was made in Norway.

Clinch. Sen. Norway, sir!

Sir Har. Yes, sir, of the shavings of deal-boards.

Clinch. Sen. That's very strange now, faith!—Lace made of the shavings of deal-boards! Egad, sir, you travellers see very strange things abroad!—very incredible things abroad indeed! Well, I'll have a cravat of that very same lace before I come home.

Sir Har. But, sir, what preparations have you made for your journey?

Clinch. Sen. A case of pocket-pistols for the bravoes, and a swimming-girdle.

Sir Har. Why these, sir?

Clinch. Sen. O Lord! sir, I'll tell you. Suppose us in Rome now; away goes me, I, to some ball—for I'll be a mighty beau! Then, as I said, I go to some ball, or some bear-baiting—'tis all one, you know; then comes a fine Italian bona roba, and plucks me by the sleeve, *Signor Angle! Signor Angle!*—she's a very fine lady, observe that!—*Signor Angle!* says she; *Signora!* says I, and trips after her to the corner of a street—suppose it Russel-street here, or any other street; then, you know, I must invite her to the tavern—I can do no less. There, up comes her bravo; the Italian grows saucy, and I give him an English douse of the face.—I can box, sir, box tightly; I was a prentice, sir.—But then, sir, he whips out his stiletto, and I whips out my bull-dog—slaps him through, trips down stairs, turns the corner of Russel-street again, and whips me into the ambassador's train, and there I'm safe as a beau behind the scenes!

Sir Har. Was your pistol charged, sir?

Clinch. Sen. Only a brace of bullets, that's all, sir.—I design to shoot seven Italians a-week, sir.

Sir Har. Sir, you won't have provocation.

Clinch. Sen. Provocation, sir!—Zauns, sir! I'll kill any man for treading upon my corn!—and there will be a devilish throng of people there.—They say that all the princes of Italy will be there.

Sir Har. And all the fops and fiddlers in Europe.—But the use of your swimming-girdle, pray, sir?

Clinch. Sen. O Lord, sir! that's easy. Suppose the ship cast away;—now, whilst other foolish people are busy at their prayers, I whips on my swimming-girdle, claps a month's provision into my pockets, and sails me away like an egg in a duck's belly.—And hearkee, sir; I have a new project in my head. Where d'ye think my swimming-girdle shall carry me upon this occasion?—'tis a new project.

Sir Har. Where, sir?

Clinch. Sen. To Civita Vecchia, faith and troth! and so save the charges of my passage. Well, sir, you must pardon me now, I'm going to see my mistress. [*Exit.*

Sir Har. This fellow's an accomplished ass before he goes abroad.—Well! this Angelica has got into my heart, and I can't get her out of my head. I must pay her t'other visit. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* Lady DARLING'S *House.*

ANGELICA *discovered alone.*

Angel. Unhappy state of woman! whose chief virtue is but ceremony, and our much boasted modesty but a slavish restraint. The strict confinement on our words makes our thoughts ramble more; and what preserves our outward fame, destroys our inward quiet.—'Tis hard that love should be denied the privilege of hatred; that scandal and detraction should be so much indulged, yet sacred love and truth debarred our conversation.

Enter Lady DARLING, CLINCHER Junior, *and* DICKY.

Lady Dar. This is my daughter, cousin.

Dicky. Now, sir, remember your three scrapes. [*Aside to him.*

Clinch. Jun. [*Saluting* ANGELICA.] One, two, three—[*Kisses her*] your humble servant.—Was not that right, Dicky?

Dicky. Ay, faith, sir; but why don't you speak to her?

Clinch. Jun. I beg your pardon Dicky, I know my distance. Would you have me speak to a lady at the first sight?

Dicky. Ay, sir, by all means; the first aim is the surest.

Clinch. Jun. Now for a good jest to make her laugh heartily.—By Jupiter Ammon, I'll go give her a kiss. [*Goes towards her.*

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR, *interposing.*

Sir Har. 'Tis all to no purpose, I told you so before; your pitiful five guineas will never do.—You may march, sir, for as far as five hundred pounds will go, I'll outbid you.

Clinch. Jun. What the devil! the madman's here again.

Lady Dar. Bless me, cousin! what d'ye mean? Affront a gentleman of his quality in my house!

Clinch. Jun. Quality! why, madam, I don't know what you mean by your madmen, and your beaux, and your quality.—They're all alike I believe.

Lady Dar. Pray, sir, walk with me into the next room.

[*Exit, leading* CLINCHER Junior, DICKY *following.*

Angel. Sir, if your conversation be no more agreeable than 'twas the last time, I would advise you to make it as short as you can.

Sir Har. The offences of my last visit, madam, bore their punishment in the commission; and have made me as uneasy till I receive pardon as your ladyship can be till I sue for it.

Angel. Sir Harry, I did not well understand the offence, and must therefore proportion it to the greatness of your apology; if you would therefore have me think it light, take no great pains in an excuse.

Sir Har. How sweet must be the lips that guard that tongue!—Then, madam, no more of past offences, let us prepare for joys to come; let this seal my pardon.—[*Kisses her hand.*] And this—[*Kisses again.*] initiate me to farther happiness.

Angel. Hold, sir,—one question, sir Harry, and pray answer plainly; d'ye love me?

Sir Har. Love you! does fire ascend? do hypo-

crites dissemble? usurers love gold, or great men flattery?—Doubt these, then question that I love.

Angel. This shows your gallantry, sir, but not your love.

Sir Har. View your own charms, madam, then judge my passion; your beauty ravishes my eye, your voice my ear, and your touch has thrilled my melting soul.

Angel. If your words be real, 'tis in your power to raise an equal flame in me.

Sir Har. Nay, then—I seize—

Angel. Hold, sir! 'tis also possible to make me detest and scorn you worse than the most profligate of your deceiving sex.

Sir Har. Ha! a very odd turn this.—I hope, madam, you only affect anger, because you know your frowns are becoming.

Angel. Sir Harry, you being the best judge of your own designs, can best understand whether my anger should be real or dissembled, think what strict modesty should bear, then judge of my resentments.

Sir Har. Strict modesty should bear! why faith, madam, I believe the strictest modesty may bear fifty guineas, and I don't believe 'twill bear one farthing more.

Angel. What d'ye mean, sir?

Sir Har. Nay, madam, what do you mean? If you go to that, I think now fifty guineas is a very fine offer for your strict modesty, as you call it.

Angel. 'Tis more charitable, sir Harry, to charge the impertinence of a man of your figure, on his defect in understanding, than on his want of manners.—I'm afraid you're mad, sir.

Sir Har. Why, madam, you're enough to make any man mad. 'Sdeath, are you not a—

Angel. What, sir?

Sir Har. Why, a lady of—strict modesty, if you will have it so.

Angel. I shall never hereafter trust common report, which represented you, sir, a man of honour, wit, and breeding; for I find you very deficient in them all. [*Exit.*

Sir Har. Now I find that the strictest pretences which the ladies of pleasure make to strict modesty, is the reason why those of quality are ashamed to wear it.

Enter VIZARD.

Viz. Ah, sir Harry! have I caught you? Well, and what success?

Sir Har. Success! Tis a shame for you young fellows in town here, to let the wenches grow so saucy: I offered her fifty guineas, and she was in her airs presently. I could have had two countesses in Paris for half the money, and *je vous remercie* into the bargain.

Viz. Gone in her airs, say you? and did not you follow her?

Sir Har. Whither should I follow her?

Viz. Into her bedchamber, man: she went on purpose. You a man of gallantry, and not understand that a lady's best pleased when she puts on her airs, as you call it!

Sir Har. She talked to me of strict modesty, and stuff.

Viz. Certainly most women magnify their modesty, for the same reason that cowards boast their courage, because they have least on't. Come, come, sir Harry, when you make your next assault, encourage your spirits with brisk burgundy; if you succeed, 'tis well; if not you have a fair excuse for your rudeness. I'll go in, and make your peace for what's past.—Oh, I had almost forgot—Colonel Standard wants to speak with you about some business.

Sir Har. I'll wait upon him presently, d'ye know where he may be found?

Viz. In the Piazza of Covent-Garden, about an hour hence I promised to see him, and there you may meet him—[*Aside*] To have your throat cut.—[*Aloud.*] I'll go in and intercede for you.

Sir Har. But no foul play with the lady, Vizard!

Viz. [*Aside.*] No fair play, I can assure you. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE IV.—*The Street before* Lady LUREWELL'S *House.*

Lady LUREWELL *and* CLINCHER Senior *are discovered coquetting in the balcony. Enter below* Colonel STANDARD.

Stand. How weak is reason in disputes of love!
That daring reason which so oft pretends
To question works of high omnipotence,
Yet poorly truckles to our weakest passions,
And yields implicit faith to foolish love,
Paying blind zeal to faithless woman's eyes.
I've heard her falsehood with such pressing proofs,
That I no longer should distrust it.
Yet still my love would baffle demonstration,
And make impossibilities seem probable. [*Looks up.*

Ha! that fool too! what, stoop so low as that animal!—'Tis true, women once fallen, like cowards in despair, will stick at nothing, there's no medium in their actions. They must be bright as angels, or black as fiends. But now for my revenge, I'll kick her cully before her face, call her a whore, curse the whole sex, and so leave her. [*Exit into the house.*

SCENE V.—*A Room in the same.*

Enter Lady LUREWELL *with* CLINCHER Senior.

Lady Lure. O Lord, sir, 'tis my husband! what will become of you?

Clinch. Sen. Eh! your husband! oh, I shall be murdered! what shall I do! where shall I run? I'll creep into an oven; I'll climb up the chimney; I'll fly! I'll swim!—I wish to the Lord I were at the Jubilee now!

Lady Lure. Can't you think of anything, sir?

Enter TIM ERRAND.

What do you want, sir?

Tim. Madam, I am looking for sir Harry Wildair; I saw him come in here this morning; and did imagine he might be here still.

Lady Lure. A lucky hit!—Here, friend, change clothes with this gentleman, quickly; strip!

Clinch. Sen. Ay, ay, quickly, strip! I'll give you half-a-crown. Come, here: so. [*They change clothes.*

Lady Lure. [*To* CLINCHER.] Now slip you down stairs, and wait at the door till my husband be gone.—[*Exit* CLINCHER.] And get you in there till I call you. [*Puts* TIM ERRAND *into the next room.*

Enter Colonel STANDARD.

Oh, sir! are you come? I wonder, sir, how you have the confidence to approach me after so base a trick!

Stand. O madam, all your artifices won't prevail.

Lady Lure. Nay, sir, your artifices won't avail. I thought, sir, that I gave you caution enough against troubling me with sir Harry Wildair's company when I sent his letters back by you; yet you, forsooth, must tell him where I lodged, and expose me again to his impertinent courtship.

Stand. I expose you to his courtship!

Lady Lure. I'll lay my life you'll deny it now. Come, come, sir; a pitiful lie is as scandalous to a red coat as an oath to a black. Did not sir Harry himself tell me that he found out by you where I lodged?

Stand. You're all lies! First, your heart is false, your eyes are double; one look belies another: and then your tongue does contradict them all. Madam, I see a little devil just now hammering out a lie in your pericranium.

Lady Lure. [*Aside.*] As I hope for mercy, he's in the right on't.—[*Aloud.*] Hold, sir, you have got the playhouse cant upon your tongue, and think that wit may privilege your railing: but I must tell you, sir, that what is satire upon the stage, is ill manners here.

Stand. What is feigned upon the stage, is here in reality real falsehood. Yes, yes, madam; I exposed you to the courtship of your fool Clincher too: I hope your female wiles will impose that upon me, also—

Lady Lure. Clincher! nay, now you are stark mad. I know no such person.

Stand. Oh woman in perfection! not know him! 'Slife, madam, can my eyes, my piercing jealous eyes, be so deluded? Nay, madam, my nose could not mistake him; for I smelt the fop by his pulvilio from the balcony down to the street.

Lady Lure. The balcony! ha, ha, ha, the balcony! I'll be hanged but he has mistaken sir Harry Wildair's footman, with a new French livery, for a beau.

Stand. 'Sdeath, madam, what is there in me that looks like a cully? did I not see him?

Lady Lure. No, no, you could not see him; you're dreaming, colonel. Will you believe your eyes, now that I have rubbed them open?—Here, you friend! [*Calls.*

Re-enter TIM ERRAND.

Stand. This is illusion all; my eyes conspire against themselves! 'tis legerdemain!

Lady Lure. Legerdemain! is that all your acknowledgment for your rude behaviour? Oh, what a curse is it to love as I do! But don't presume too far, sir, on my affection: for such ungenerous usage will soon return my tired heart.—[*To* TIM ERRAND.] Begone, sir, to your impertinent master! and tell him I shall never be at leisure to receive any of his troublesome visits. Send to me to know when I should be at home!—Begone, sir!—I am sure he has made me an unfortunate woman. [*Weeps.—Exit* TIM ERRAND.

Stand. Nay, then there is no certainty in
Nature;
And truth is only falsehood well disguised.

Lady Lure. Sir, had not I owned my fond foolish passion, I should not have been subject to such unjust suspicions: but 'tis an ungrateful return. [*Weeping.*

Stand. [*Aside.*] Now, where are all my firm resolves? I will believe her just. My passion raised my jealousy; then why mayn't love be blind in finding faults as in excusing them?—[*Aloud.*] I hope, madam, you'll pardon me, since jealousy, that magnified my suspicion, is as much the effect of love as my easiness in being satisfied.

Lady Lure. Easiness in being satisfied! You men have got an insolent way of extorting pardon by persisting in your faults. No, no, sir, cherish your suspicions, and feed upon your jealousy: 'tis fit meat for your squeamish stomach.
With me all women should this rule pursue:
Who thinks us false, should never find us true.
[*Exit in a rage.*

Re-enter CLINCHER Senior.

Clinch. Sen. Well, intriguing is the prettiest, pleasantest thing for a man of my parts! How shall we laugh at the husband when he is gone!—How silly he looks! He's in labour of horns already:—to make a colonel a cuckold? 'Twill be rare news for the aldermen. [*Aside.*

Stand. All this sir Harry has occasioned; but he's brave, and will afford me just revenge.—Oh, this is the porter I sent the challenge by.—Well, sir, have you found him?

Clinch. Sen. What the devil does he mean now? [*Aside.*

Stand. Have you given sir Harry the note, fellow?

Clinch. Sen. The note! what note?

Stand. The letter, blockhead! which I sent by you to sir Harry Wildair; have you seen him?

Clinch. Sen. [*Aside.*] O Lord! what shall I say now?—[*Aloud.*] Seen him?—yes, sir—no, sir.—I have, sir—I have not, sir.

Stand. The fellow's mad! Answer me directly, sirrah, or I'll break your head!

Clinch. Sen. I know sir Harry very well, sir; but as to the note, sir, I can't remember a word on't: truth is, I have a very bad memory.

Stand. Oh, sir, I'll quicken your memory! [*Strikes him.*

Clinch. Sen. Zauns, sir, hold! I did give him the note.

Stand. And what answer?

Clinch. Sen. I mean, sir, I did not give him the note.

Stand. What! d'ye banter, rascal? [*Strikes him again.*

Clinch. Sen. Hold, sir! hold!—He did send an answer.

Stand. What was't, villain?

Clinch. Sen. Why, truly, sir, I have forgot it: I told you that I had a very treacherous memory.

Stand. I'll engage you shall remember me this month, rascal! [*Beats him off, and exit.*

Re-enter Lady LUREWELL *with* PARLY.

Lady Lure. *Fort bon! fort bon! fort bon!*—this is better than I expected; but fortune still helps the industrious.

Re-enter CLINCHER Senior.

Clinch. Sen. Ah, the devil take all intriguing, say I! and him who first invented canes! That cursed colonel has got such a knack of beating his

men, that he has left the mark of a collar of bandileers about my shoulders.

Lady Lure. Oh, my poor gentleman! and was it beaten?

Clinch. Sen. Yes, I have been beaten: but where's my clothes! my clothes?

Lady Lure. What! you won't leave me so soon, my dear, will ye?

Clinch. Sen. Will ye!—if ever I peep into a colonel's tent again, may I be forced to run the gauntlet!—But my clothes, madam.

Lady Lure. I sent the porter down stairs with them: did not you meet him?

Clinch. Sen. Meet him! no, not I.

Par. No! he went out of the back-door, and is run clear away, I'm afraid.

Clinch. Sen. Gone! say you; and with my clothes! my fine Jubilee clothes!—Oh, the rogue! the thief!—I'll have him hanged for murder. But how shall I get home in this pickle?

Par. I'm afraid, sir, the colonel will be back presently; for he dines at home.

Clinch. Sen. Oh, then I must sneak off!—Was ever man so managed! to have his coat well thrashed, and lose his coat too? [*Exit.*

Lady Lure. Thus the noble poet spoke truth:—
Nothing suits worse with vice than want of sense:
Fools are still wicked at their own expense.

Par. Methinks, madam, the injuries you have suffered by men must be very great, to raise such heavy resentments against the whole sex.

Lady Lure. The greatest injury that woman could sustain: they robbed me of that jewel which, preserved, exalts our sex almost to angels; but destroyed, debases us below the worst of brutes—mankind.

Par. But I think, madam, your anger should be only confined to the author of your wrongs.

Lady Lure. The author!—Alas! I know him not; which makes my wrongs the greater.

Par. Not know him! 'tis odd, madam, that a man should rob you of that same jewel you mentioned, and you not know him!

Lady Lure. Leave trifling!—'tis a subject that always sours my temper. But since, by thy faithful service, I have some reason to confide in your secrecy, hear the strange relation. Some twelve years ago I lived at my father's house in Oxfordshire, blest with innocence, the ornamental but weak guard of blooming beauty. I was then just fifteen, an age oft fatal to the female sex:—our youth is tempting, our innocence credulous, romances moving, love powerful, and men are—villains! Then it happened, that three young gentlemen, from the university, coming into the country, and being benighted, and strangers, called at my father's: he was very glad of their company, and offered them the entertainment of his house.

Par. Which they accepted, no doubt.—Oh! these strolling collegians are never abroad but upon some mischief!

Lady Lure. They had some private frolic or design in their heads, as appeared by their not naming one another; which my father perceiving, out of civility, made no inquiry into their affairs. Two of them had a heavy, pedantic, university air, a sort of disagreeable scholastic boorishness in their behaviour; but the third!—

Par. Ay, the third, madam!—the third of all things, they say, is very critical.

Lady Lure. He was—but, in short, nature cut him out for my undoing!—He seemed to be about eighteen.

Par. A fit match for your fifteen as could be.

Lady Lure. He had a genteel sweetness in his face, a graceful comeliness in his person, and his tongue was fit to soothe soft innocence to ruin. His very looks were witty, and his expressive eyes spoke softer, prettier things, than words could frame.

Par. There will be mischief by-and-by; I never heard a woman talk so much of eyes but there were tears presently after.

Lady Lure. His discourse was directed to my father, but his looks to me. After supper, I went to my chamber, and read Cassandra; then went to bed, and dreamt of him all night; rose in the morning, and made verses: so fell desperately in love. My father was so well pleased with his conversation, that he begged their company next day; they consented; and next night, Parly—

Par. Ay, next night, madam,—next night (I'm afraid) was a night indeed.

Lady Lure. He bribed my maid, with his gold, out of her honesty; and me, with his rhetoric, out of my honour. She admitted him to my chamber, and there he vowed, and swore, and wept, and sighed—and conquered. [*Weeps.*

Par. Alack a-day, poor fifteen! [*Weeps.*

Lady Lure. He swore that he would come down from Oxford in a fortnight and marry me.

Par. [*Aside.*] The old bait! the old bait!—I was cheated just so myself.—[*Aloud.*] But had not you the wit to know his name all this while?

Lady Lure. Alas! what wit had innocence like mine? He told me, that he was under an obligation to his companions of concealing himself then, but that he would write to me in two days, and let me know his name and quality. After all the binding oaths of constancy, joining hands, exchanging hearts, I gave him a ring with this motto, *Love and honour*, then we parted; but I never saw the dear deceiver more.

Par. No, nor never will I warrant you.

Lady Lure. I need not tell my griefs, which my father's death made a fair pretence for; he left me sole heiress and executrix to three thousand pounds a year. At last, my love for this single dissembler turned to a hatred of the whole sex; and, resolving to divert my melancholy, and make my large fortune subservient to my pleasure and revenge, I went to travel, where, in most courts of Europe, I have done some execution. Here I will play my last scene; then retire to my country-house, live solitary, and die a penitent.

Par. But don't you still love this dear dissembler?

Lady Lure. Most certainly: 'tis love of him that keeps my anger warm, representing the baseness of mankind full in view; and makes my resentments work. We shall have that old impotent lecher Smuggler here to-night; I have a plot to swinge him, and his precise nephew Vizard.

Par. I think, madam, you manage everybody that comes in your way.

Lady Lure. No, Parly, those men whose pretensions I found just and honourable, I fairly dismissed, by letting them know my firm resolutions never to marry. But those villains that would attempt my honour, I've seldom failed to manage.

Par. What d'ye think of the colonel, madam? I suppose his designs are honourable.

Lady Lure. That man's a riddle; there's something of honour in his temper that pleases: I'm sure he loves me too, because he's soon jealous, and soon satisfied. But he's a man still. When I once tried his pulse about marriage, his blood ran as low as a coward's. He swore, indeed, that he loved me, but could not marry me forsooth, because he was engaged elsewhere. So poor a pretence made me disdain his passion, which otherwise might have been uneasy to me. But hang him, I have teased him enough. Besides, Parly, I begin to be tired of my revenge.—But this buss and guinea I must maul once more: I'll hansel his woman's clothes for him!—Go, get me pen and ink; I must write to Vizard too. [*Exit* PARLY.

Fortune this once assist me as before,
Two such machines can never work in vain,
As thy propitious wheel, and my projecting brain. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Covent Garden.*

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR *and* COLONEL STANDARD *meeting.*

Stand. I thought, sir Harry, to have met you ere this in a more convenient place; but since my wrongs were without ceremony, my revenge shall be so too. Draw, sir!

Sir Har. Draw sir! what shall I draw?

Stand. Come, come, sir, I like your facetious humour well enough; it shows courage and unconcern. I know you brave; and therefore use you thus. Draw your sword.

Sir Har. Nay, to oblige you, I will draw; but the devil take me if I fight!—Perhaps, colonel, this is the prettiest blade you have seen.

Stand. I doubt not but the arm is good; and therefore think both worth my resentment. Come, sir.

Sir Har. But, prithee colonel, dost think that I am such a madman as to send my soul to the devil and my body to the worms upon every fool's errand?

Stand. I hope you're no coward, sir.

Sir Har. Coward, sir! I have eight thousand pounds a year, sir.

Stand. You fought in Flanders to my knowledge.

Sir Har. Ay, for the same reason that I wore a red coat, because 'twas fashionable.

Stand. Sir, you fought a French count in Paris.

Sir Har. True, sir; he was a beau like myself. Now you're a soldier, colonel, and fighting's your trade; and I think it downright madness to contend with any man in his profession.

Stand. Come, sir, no more dallying: I shall take very unseemly methods if you don't show yourself a gentleman.

Sir Har. A gentleman! why there again now? A gentleman! I tell you once more, colonel, that I am a baronet, and have eight thousand pounds a year. I can dance, sing, ride, fence, understand the languages. Now, I can't conceive how running you through the body should contribute one jot more to my gentility. But, pray, colonel, I had forgot to ask you: what's the quarrel?

Stand. A woman, sir.

Sir Har. Then I put up my sword.—Take her.

Stand. Sir, my honour's concerned.

Sir Har. Nay, if your honour be concerned with a woman, get it out of her hands as soon as you can. An honourable lover is the greatest slave in nature; some will say, the greatest fool. Come, come, colonel, this is something about the lady Lurewell, I warrant; I can give you satisfaction in that affair.

Stand. Do so then immediately.

Sir Har. Put up your sword first; you know I dare fight: but I had much rather make you a friend than an enemy. I can assure you, this lady will prove too hard for one of your temper. You have too much honour, too much in conscience, to be a favourite with the ladies.

Stand. I'm assured, sir, she never gave you any encouragement.

Sir Har. A man can never hear reason with a sword in his hand. Sheathe your weapon; and then if I don't satisfy you, sheathe it in my body.

Stand. Give me but demonstration of her granting you any favour, and 'tis enough.

Sir Har. Will you take my word?

Stand. Pardon me, sir, I cannot.

Sir Har. Will you believe your own eyes?

Stand. 'Tis ten to one whether I shall or no; they have deceived me already.

Sir Har. That's hard.—But some means I shall devise for your satisfaction. We must fly this place, else that cluster of mob will overwhelm us. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Mob, TIM ERRAND'S *wife hurrying in* CLINCHER Senior.

Wife. Oh, the villain! the rogue! he has murdered my husband: ah, my poor Timothy! [*Crying.*

Clinch. Sen. Dem your Timothy!—your husband has murdered me, woman; for he has carried away my fine Jubilee clothes.

Wife. Ay, you cut-throat, have you not got his clothes upon your back there?—Neighbours, don't you know poor Timothy's coat and apron?

Mob. Ay, ay, 'tis the same.

1 *Mob.* What shall we do with him, neighbours?

2 *Mob.* We'll pull him in pieces.

1 *Mob.* No, no; then we may be hanged for murder: but we'll drown him.

Clinch. Sen. Ha, good people, pray don't drown me; for I never learned to swim in all my life.—Ah, this plaguy intriguing!

Mob. Away with him! away with him to the Thames!

Clinch. Sen. Oh, if I had but my swimming girdle, now! [*Aside.*

Enter Constable.[1]

Const. Hold, neighbours! I command the peace.

Wife. Oh, Mr. Constable, here's a rogue that has murdered my husband, and robbed him of his clothes.

Const. Murder and robbery! then he must be a gentleman.—Hands off there! he must not be abused.—Give an account of yourself: are you a gentleman?

Clinch. Sen. No, sir, I am a beau.

Const. Then you have killed nobody, I'm persuaded. How came you by these clothes, sir?

Clinch. Sen. You must know, sir, that walking along, sir, I don't know how, sir; I can't tell where, sir; and—so the porter and I changed clothes, sir.

Const. Very well, the man speaks reason and like a gentleman.

Wife. But pray, Mr. Constable, ask him how he changed clothes with him.

Const. Silence, woman! and don't disturb the court.—Well, sir, how did you change clothes?

Clinch. Sen. Why, sir, he pulled off my coat, and I drew off his; so I puts on his coat, and he puts on mine.

Const. Why, neighbours, I don't find that he's guilty: search him; and if he carries no arms about him, we'll let him go.

[*They search his pockets, and pull out his pistols.*

Clinch. Sen. O gemini! my Jubilee pistols!

Const. What, a case of pistols! then the case is plain.—Speak, what are you, sir? whence came you, and whither go you?

Clinch. Sen. Sir, I came from Russel-street, and am going to the Jubilee.

Wife. You shall go to the gallows, you rogue!

Const. Away with him! away with him to Newgate, straight!

Clinch. Sen. [*Aside.*] I shall go to the Jubilee now, indeed. [*Exeunt.*

Re-enter Sir Harry Wildair *and* Colonel Standard.

Sir Har. In short, colonel, 'tis all nonsense. Fight for a woman!—Hard by is the lady's house; if you please we'll wait on her together: you shall draw your sword, I'll draw my snuffbox: you shall produce your wounds received in war, I'll relate mine by Cupid's dart: you shall look big, I'll ogle: you shall swear, I'll sigh: you shall sa! sa! and I'll coupee: and if she flies not to my arms like a hawk to its perch, my dancing-master deserves to be damned!

Stand. With the generality of women, I grant you, these arts may prevail.

Sir Har. Generality of women! why there again you're out. They're all alike, sir; I never heard of any one that was particular, but one.

Stand. Who was she, pray?

Sir Har. Penelope, I think, she's called; and that's a poetical story too. When will you find a poet in our age make a woman so chaste?

Stand. Well, sir Harry, your facetious humour can disguise falsehood, and make calumny pass for satire. But you have promised me ocular demonstration that she favours you: make that good, and I shall then maintain faith and female to be as inconsistent as truth and falsehood.

Sir Har. Nay, by what you have told me, I am satisfied that she imposes on us all; and Vizard, too, seems what I still suspected him: but his honesty once mistrusted, spoils his knavery.—But will you be convinced, if our plot succeeds?

Stand. I rely on your word and honour, sir Harry; which if I doubted, my distrust would cancel the obligation of their security.

Sir Har. Then meet me half an hour hence at the Rummer. You must oblige me by taking a hearty glass with me toward the fitting me out for a certain project which this night I undertake.

Stand. I guess by the preparation that woman's the design.

Sir Har. Yes, faith.—I am taken dangerously ill with two foolish maladies, modesty and love; the first I'll cure with burgundy, and my love by a night's lodging with the damsel. A sure remedy. *Probatum est!*

Stand. I'll certainly meet you, sir.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*The same.*

Enter Clincher Junior *and* Dicky.

Clinch. Jun. Ah, Dicky, this London is a sad place! a sad vicious place! I wish that I were in the country again.—And this brother of mine! I'm sorry he's so great a rake: I had rather see him dead than see him thus.

Dicky. Ay, sir, he'll spend his whole estate at this same Jubilee. Who d'ye think lives at this same Jubilee?

Clinch. Jun. Who, pray?

Dicky. The pope.

Clinch. Jun. The devil he does! My brother go to the place where the pope dwells! he's bewitched sure!

Enter Tim Errand.

Dicky. Indeed I believe he is, for he's strangely altered.

Clinch. Jun. Altered! why he looks like a Jesuit already.

Tim. This lace will sell. What a blockhead was the fellow to trust me with his coat! If I can get cross the Garden, down to the water side, I'm pretty secure. [*Aside.*

Clinch. Jun. Brother!—Alaw! O gemini! are you my brother?

Dicky. I seize you in the king's name, sir.

Tim. O Lord! should this prove some parliament man now! [*Aside.*

Clinch. Jun. Speak, you rogue, what are you?

Tim. A poor porter, sir, and going of an errand.

Dicky. What errand? speak, you rogue.

Tim. A fool's errand, I'm afraid.

Clinch. Jun. Who sent you?

Tim. A beau, sir.

Dicky. No, no, the rogue has murdered your brother, and stripped him of his clothes.

Clinch. Jun. Murdered my brother! O crimini! O my poor Jubilee brother!—Stay, by Jupiter Ammon, I'm heir though!—Speak, sirrah, have you killed him? Confess that you have killed him, and I'll give you half-a-crown.

Tim. Who, I sir? Alack-a-day, sir, I never killed any man but a carrier's horse once.

Clinch. Jun. Then you shall certainly be hanged, but confess that you killed him, and we'll let you go.

Tim. [*Aside.*] Telling the truth hangs a man, but confessing a lie can do no harm; besides, if

the worst comes to the worst, I can but deny it again.—[*Aloud.*] Well, sir, since I must tell you, I did kill him.

Clinch. Jun. Here's your money, sir:—but are you sure you killed him dead?

Tim. Sir, I'll swear it before any judge in England.

Dicky. But are you sure that he's dead in law?

Tim. Dead in law! I can't tell whether he be dead in law: but he's dead as a door-nail; for I gave him seven knocks on the head with a hammer.

Dicky. Then you have the estate by the statute. Any man that's knocked o'th' head is dead in law.

Clinch. Jun. But are you sure he was *compos mentis* when he was killed?

Tim. I suppose he was, sir; for he told me nothing to the contrary afterwards.

Clinch. Jun. Hey! then I go to the Jubilee.—Strip, sir, strip! by Jupiter Ammon, strip!

[*Exchanges clothes with* TIM ERRAND.

Dicky. Ah! don't swear, sir.

Clinch. Jun. Swear, sir! Zoons, han't I got the estate, sir? Come, sir, now I'm in mourning for my brother.

Tim. I hope you'll let me go now, sir—

Clinch. Jun. Yes, yes, sir; but you must first do me the favour to swear positively before a magistrate that you killed him dead, that I may enter upon the estate without any trouble. By Jupiter Ammon, all my religion's gone since I put on these fine clothes!—Hey! call me a coach somebody.

Tim. Ay, master, let me go, and I'll call one immediately.

Clinch. Jun. No, no, Dicky, carry this spark before a justice, and when he has made oath, you may discharge him.—[*Exeunt* DICKY *and* TIM ERRAND.] And I'll go see Angelica. Now, that I'm an elder brother, I'll court, and swear, and rant, and rake, and go to the Jubilee with the best of them. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* Lady LUREWELL'S *House.*

Enter Lady LUREWELL *and* PARLY.

Lady Lure. Are you sure that Vizard had my letter?

Par. Yes, yes, madam; one of your ladyship's footmen gave it to him in the Park, and he told the bearer, with all transports of joy, that he would be punctual to a minute.

Lady Lure. Thus most villains, sometime or other, are punctual to their ruin; and hypocrisy, by imposing on the world, at last deceives itself. Are all things prepared for his reception?

Par. Exactly to your ladyship's order; the alderman too is just come, dressed and cooked up for iniquity.

Lady Lure. Then he has got woman's clothes on?

Par. Yes, madam, and has passed upon the family for your nurse.

Lady Lure. Convey him into that closet, and put out the candles, and tell him I'll wait on him presently.—[*As* PARLY *goes to put out the candles somebody knocks.*] This must be some clown without manners, or a gentleman above ceremony.—Who's there?

SONG.

Sir Har. [*Without.*] Thus Damon knock'd at Celia's door,
He sigh'd, and begg'd, and wept, and swore;
The sign was so; [*Knocks.*
She answer'd, no,
No, no, no. [*Knocks thrice.*

Again he sigh'd, again he pray'd;—
"No, Damon, no, I am afraid;
Consider, Damon, I'm a maid,
Consider; no,
I'm a maid.
No, no, no."

At last his sighs and tears made way,
She rose, and softly turn'd the key;
"Come in," said she, "but do not stay.
I may conclude
You will be rude,
But, if you are, you may." [*Exit* PARLY.

Enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR.

Lady Lure. 'Tis too early for serenading, sir Harry.

Sir Har. Wheresoever love is, there music is proper; there's an harmonious consent in their natures, and, when rightly joined, they make up the chorus of earthly happiness.

Lady Lure. But, sir Harry, what tempest drives you here at this hour?

Sir Har. No tempest, madam, but as fair weather as ever enticed a citizen's wife to cuckold her husband in fresh air:—love, madam.

[*Taking her by the hand.*

Lady Lure. *As pure and white as angels' soft desires.*—Is't not so?

Sir Har. *Fierce, as when ripe consenting beauty fires.*

Lady Lure. [*Aside.*] O villain! What privilege has man to our destruction, that thus they hunt our ruin?—[*Aloud.*] If this be a love token,—[Sir HARRY WILDAIR *drops a ring, she takes it up*] your mistress's favours hang very loose about you, sir.

Sir. Har. I can't justly, madam, pay your trouble of taking it up by anything but desiring you to wear it.

Lady Lure. You gentlemen have the cunningest ways of playing the fool, and are so industrious in your profuseness! Speak seriously, am I beholden to chance or design for this ring?

Sir Har. To design, upon my honour, and I hope my design will succeed. [*Aside.*

Lady Lure. [Singing.] *And what shall I give you for such a fine thing?*

Sir Har. [Singing.] *You'll give me another, you'll give me another fine thing.*

Lady Lure. Shall I be free with you, sir Harry?

Sir Har. With all my heart, madam, so I may be free with you.

Lady Lure. Then, plainly, sir, I shall beg the favour to see you some other time, for at this very minute I have two lovers in the house.

Sir Har. Then, to be as plain, I must be gone this minute, for I must see another mistress within these two hours.

Lady Lure. Frank and free.

Sir Har. As you with me.—Madam, your most humble servant. [*Exit.*

Lady Lure. Nothing can disturb his humour.—Now for my merchant and Vizard.

[*Exit, and takes the candles with her.*

Re-enter PARLY, *leading in* Alderman SMUGGLER, *dressed in woman's clothes.*

Par. This way, Mr. Alderman.

Smug. Well, Mrs. Parly, I'm obliged to you for this trouble; here are a couple of shillings for you. Times are hard, very hard indeed, but next time I'll steal a pair of silk stockings from my wife, and bring them to you.—What are you fumbling about my pockets for?

Par. Only settling the plaits of your gown. Here, sir, get into this closet, and my lady will wait on you presently.

[*Puts him into the closet, runs out, and returns with* VIZARD.

Viz. Where wouldst thou lead me, my dear auspicious little pilot?

Par. You're almost in port, sir; my lady's in the closet, and will come out to you immediately.

Viz. Let me thank thee as I ought. [*Kisses her.*

Par. [*Aside.*] Psha! who has hired me best—a couple of shillings or a couple of kisses? [*Exit.*

Viz. Propitious darkness guides the lover's steps, and night that shadows outward sense, lights up our inward joy. Night! the great awful ruler of mankind, which like the Persian monarch hides its royalty to raise the veneration of the world. Under thy easy reign dissemblers may speak truth; all slavish forms and ceremonies laid aside, and generous villany may act without constraint.

Smug. [*Peeping out of the closet.*] Bless me! what voice is this?

Viz. Our hungry appetites, like the wild beasts of prey, now scour abroad to gorge their craving maws; the pleasure of hypocrisy, like a chained lion once broke loose, wildly indulges its new freedom, ranging through all unbounded joys.

Smug. My nephew's voice, and certainly possessed with an evil spirit; he talks as profanely as an actor possessed with a poet.

Viz. Ha! I hear a voice.—Madam—my life, my happiness, where are you, madam?

Smug. [*Aside.*] Madam! He takes me for a woman too, I'll try him.—[*Aloud.*] Where have you left your sanctity, Mr. Vizard?

Viz. Talk no more of that ungrateful subject—I left it where it has only business, with daylight; 'tis needless to wear a mask in the dark.

Smug. [*Aside.*] O the rogue, the rogue!—[*Aloud.*] The world takes you for a very sober, virtuous gentleman.

Viz. Ay, madam, that adds security to all my pleasures. With me a cully-squire may squander his estate, and ne'er be thought a spendthrift: with me a holy elder may zealously be drunk, and toast his tuneful nose in sack, to make it hold forth clearer: but what is most my praise, the formal rigid, she that rails at vice and men, with me secures her loosest pleasures, and her strictest honour. She who with scornful mien and virtuous pride disdains the name of whore, with me can wanton, and laugh at the deluded world.

Smug. [*Aside.*] How have I been deceived!—[*Aloud.*] Then you are very great among the ladies?

Viz. Yes, madam; they know that, like a mole in the earth, I dig deep, but invisible; not like those fluttering noisy sinners, whose pleasure is the proclamation of their faults; those empty flashes who no sooner kindle, but they must blaze to alarm the world.—But come, madam, you delay our pleasures.

Smug. [*Aside.*] He surely takes me for the lady Lurewell; she has made him an appointment too; but I'll be revenged of both.—[*Aloud.*] Well, sir, what are those you are so intimate with?

Viz. Come, come, madam, you know very well: those who stand so high, that the vulgar envy even their crimes, whose figure adds privilege to their sin, and makes it pass unquestioned; fair, high, pampered females, whose speaking eyes and piercing voice would arm the statue of a stoic, and animate his cold marble with the soul of an epicure; all ravishing, lovely, soft, and kind, like you!

Smug. [*Aside.*] I'm very lovely and soft indeed! you shall find me much harder than you imagine, friend!—[*Aloud.*] Well, sir, but I suppose your dissimulation has some other motive besides pleasure?

Viz. Yes, madam, the honestest motive in the world—interest. You must know, madam, that I have an old uncle, alderman Smuggler—you have seen him, I suppose?

Smug. Yes, yes, I have some small acquaintance with him.

Viz. 'Tis the most knavish, precise, covetous old rogue that ever died of a gout.

Smug. [*Aside.*] Ah! the young son of a whore!—[*Aloud.*] Well, sir, and what of him?

Viz. Hell hungers not more for wretched souls than he for ill-got pelf: and yet (what's wonderful) he that would stick at no profitable villany himself, loves holiness in another. He prays all Sunday for the sins of the week past; he spends all dinner-time in too tedious graces; and what he designs a blessing to the meat, proves a curse to his family. He's the most—

Smug. Well, well, sir, I know him very well.

Viz. Then, madam, he has a swinging estate, which I design to purchase as a saint, and spend like a gentleman. He got it by cheating, and should lose it by deceit. By the pretence of my zeal and sobriety, I'll cozen the old miser one of these days out of a settlement and deed of conveyance—

Smug. It shall be a deed to convey you to the gallows, then, you young dog! [*Aside.*

Viz. And no sooner he's dead, but I'll rattle over his grave with a coach-and-six, to inform his covetous ghost how genteelly I spend his money.

Smug. I'll prevent you, boy; for I'll have my money buried with me. [*Aside.*

Viz. Bless me, madam! here's a light coming this way, I must fly immediately! When shall I see you, madam?

Smug. Sooner than you expect, my dear!

Viz. Pardon me, dear madam, I would not be seen for the world. I would sooner forfeit my life, nay my pleasure, than my reputation. [*Exit.*

Smug. Reputation! reputation! that poor word suffers a great deal. Well, thou art the most accomplished hypocrite that ever made a grave plodding face over a dish of coffee and a pipe of tobacco! He owes me for seven years' maintenance, and shall pay me by seven years' imprisonment; and when I die, I'll leave him to the fee-simple of a rope and a shilling!—Who are these? I begin to be afraid of some mischief. I wish that I were safe within the city liberties.—I'll hide myself. [*Stands close.*

Enter Butler *and* Footmen *with lights.*

But. I say there are two spoons wanting, and I'll search the whole house. Two spoons will be no small gap in my quarter's wages.

Foot. When did you miss 'em, James?

But. Miss them! why I miss them now; in short, they must be among you, and if you don't return them, I'll go to the cunning-man to-morrow morning; my spoons I want, and my spoons I will have.

Foot. Come, come, search about.—[*Search, and discover* Alderman SMUGGLER.] Ah! who's this?

But. Hark'ee, good woman, what makes you hide yourself? what are you ashamed of?

Smug. Ashamed of!—O Lord, sir! I'm an honest old woman that never was ashamed of anything.

But. What are you? a midwife then? Speak, did not you see a couple of stray spoons in your travels?

Smug. Stray spoons!

But. Ay, ay, stray spoons; in short, you stole them, and I'll shake your old limbs to pieces if you don't deliver them presently.

Smug. [*Aside.*] Bless me, a reverend elder of seventy years old accused for petty larceny!—[*Aloud.*] Why, search me, good people, search me; and if you find any spoons about me, you shall burn me for a witch.

But. Ay, ay, we will search you, mistress.

[*They search, and pull the spoons out of his pocket.*

Smug. Oh, the devil! the devil!

But. Where? where is he?—Lord bless us! she is a witch in good earnest, maybe!

Smug. Oh, it was some devil, some Covent-garden or St. James's devil that put them in my pocket!

But. Ay, ay, you shall be hanged for a thief, burned for a witch, and then carted for a bawd. Speak, what are you?

Re-enter Lady LUREWELL.

Smug. I'm the lady Lurewell's nurse.

Lady Lure. What noise is this?

But. Here is an old succubus, madam, that has stole two silver spoons, and says she's your nurse.

Lady Lure. My nurse! O the impudent old jade! I never saw the withered creature before.

Smug. [*Aside.*] Then I am finely caught!—[*Aloud.*] O madam, madam! don't you know me? don't you remember buss and guinea?

Lady Lure. Was ever such impudence!—I know thee! why thou'rt as brazen as a bawd in the side-box.—Take her before a justice, and then to Newgate. Away!

Smug. Oh! consider, madam, that I'm an alderman. [*Aside to* Lady LUREWELL.

Lady Lure. [*Aside to* Alderman SMUGGLER.] Consider, sir, that you're a compound of covetousness, hypocrisy, and knavery, and must be punished accordingly. You must be in petticoats, gouty monster, must ye! you must buss and guinea too! you must tempt a lady's honour, old satyr!—[*Aloud.*] Away with him!

[*Exeunt* Butler *and* Footmen *with* Alderman SMUGGLER.

Still may our sex thus frauds of men oppose,
Still may our arts delude these tempting foes:
May honour rule, and never fall betray'd,
But vice be caught in nets for virtue laid. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Lady DARLING'S *House.*

Lady DARLING *and* ANGELICA.

Lady Dar. Daughter, since you have to deal with a man of so peculiar a temper, you must not think the general arts of love can secure him; you may therefore allow such a courtier some encouragement extraordinary without reproach to your modesty.

Angel. I am sensible, madam, that a formal nicety makes our modesty sit awkward, and appears rather a chain to enslave than bracelet to adorn us: it should show, when unmolested, easy and innocent as a dove, but strong and vigorous as a falcon when assaulted.

Lady Dar. I'm afraid, daughter, you mistake sir Harry's gaiety for dishonour.

Angel. Though modesty, madam, may wink, it must not sleep, when powerful enemies are abroad. I must confess, that of all men's, I would not see sir Harry Wildair's faults; nay, I could wrest his most suspicious words a thousand ways to make them look like honour.—But, madam, in spite of love I must hate him, and curse those practices which taint our nobility, and rob all virtuous women of the bravest men.

Lady Dar. You must certainly be mistaken, Angelica; for I'm satisfied sir Harry's designs are only to court and marry you.

Angel. His pretence, perhaps, was such; but women now, like enemies, are attacked; whether by treachery or fairly conquered, the glory of triumph is the same. Pray, madam, by what means were you made acquainted with his designs?

Lady Dar. Means, child! why, my cousin Vizard, who I'm sure is your sincere friend, sent him. He brought me this letter from my cousin.

[*Gives her the letter, which she opens.*

Angel. [*Aside.*] Ha! Vizard! then I'm abused in earnest. Would sir Harry, by his instigation, fix a base affront upon me? No, I can't suspect him of so ungenteel a crime. This letter shall trace the truth.—[*Aloud.*] My suspicions, madam, are much cleared; and I hope to satisfy your ladyship in my management when next I see sir Harry.

Enter Footman.

Foot. Madam, here's a gentleman below calls himself Wildair.

Lady Dar. Conduct him up.—[*Exit* Footman.] Daughter, I won't doubt your discretion. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR.

Sir Har. Oh, the delights of love and burgundy!—Madam, I have toasted your ladyship fifteen bumpers successively, and swallowed cupids like loaches, to every glass.

Angel. And what then, sir?

Sir Har. Why then, madam, the wine has got into my head, and the cupids into my heart; and unless by quenching quick my flame, you kindly ease the smart, I'm a lost man, madam.

Angel. Drunkenness, sir Harry, is the worst pretence a gentleman can make for rudeness: for the excuse is as scandalous as the fault.—Therefore, pray consider who you are so free with, sir; a woman of condition, that can call half-a-dozen footmen upon occasion.

Sir Har. Nay, madam, if you have a mind to toss me in a blanket, half-a-dozen chambermaids would do better service.—Come, come, madam, though the wine makes me lisp, yet has it taught me to speak plainer. By all the dust of my ancient progenitors, I must this night quarter my coat of arms with yours.

Angel. Nay then—Who waits there? [*Calls.*

Enter Footmen.

Take hold of that madman, and bind him.

Sir Har. Nay, then burgundy's the word, and slaughter will ensue. Hold!—do you know, scoundrels, that I have been drinking victorious burgundy? [*Draws.*

Foot. We know you're drunk, sir.

Sir Har. Then, how have you the impudence, rascals, to assault a gentleman with a couple of flasks of courage in his head?

Foot. Sir, we must do as our young mistress commands us.

Sir Har. Nay, then have among ye, dogs!

[*Throws money among them: they scramble, and take it up. He pelting them out, shuts the door, and returns.*

Rascals! Poltroons!—I have charmed the dragon, and now the fruit's my own.

Angel. Oh, the mercenary wretches! this was a plot to betray me.

Sir Har. I have put the whole army to flight: and, now take the general prisoner. [*Laying hold of her.*

Angel. I conjure you, sir, by the sacred name of honour, by your dead father's name, and the fair reputation of your mother's chastity, that you offer not the least offence!—Already you have wronged me past redress.

Sir Har. Thou art the most unaccountable creature!

Angel. What madness, sir Harry, what wild dream of loose desire could prompt you to attempt this baseness? View me well. The brightness of my mind, methinks, should lighten outwards, and let you see your mistake in my behaviour.
I think it shines with so much innocence in my face,
That it should dazzle all your vicious thoughts:
Think not I am defenceless 'cause alone.
Your very self is guard against yourself:
I'm sure, there's something generous in your soul;
My words shall search it out,
And eyes shall fire it for my own defence.

Sir Har. [*Mimicking.*] Tall tidum, ti dum, tall ti didi, didum.—A million to one now but this girl is just come flush from reading the Rival Queens.—Egad, I'll at her in her own cant.—
O my Statira! O my angry dear!
Turn thy eyes on me,—behold thy beau in buskins.

Angel. Behold me, sir; view me with a sober thought,
Free from those fumes of wine that throw a mist
Before your sight, and you shall find
That every glance from my reproaching eyes,
Is arm'd with sharp resentment, and with
A virtuous pride that looks dishonour dead.

Sir Har. [*Aside.*] This is the first whore in heroics that I have met with.—[*Aloud.*] Look ye, madam, as to that slender particular of your virtue, we shan't quarrel about it; you may be as virtuous as any woman in England, if you please; you may say your prayers all the time.—But pray, madam, be pleased to consider what is this same virtue that you make such a mighty noise about. Can your virtue bespeak you a front row in the boxes? No; for the players can't live upon virtue. Can your virtue keep you a coach and six? No, no, your virtuous women walk a foot. Can your virtue hire you a pew in a church? Why, the very sexton will tell you, no. Can your virtue stake for you at picquet? No. Then what business has a woman with virtue? Come, come, madam, I offered you fifty guineas: there's a hundred.—The devil! Virtuous still! Why, 'tis a hundred, five score, a hundred guineas.

Angel. O indignation?
Were I a man, you durst not use me thus;
But the mean, poor abuse you throw on me,
Reflects upon yourself?
Our sex still strikes an awe upon the brave,
And only cowards dare affront a woman.

Sir Har. Affront! 'sdeath, madam! a hundred guineas will set you up at basset, a hundred guineas will furnish out your lodgings with china; a hundred guineas will give you an air of quality; a hundred guineas will buy you a rich escritoir for your billets-doux, or a fine Common Prayer-book for your virtue. A hundred guineas will buy a hundred fine things, and fine things are for fine ladies; and fine ladies are for fine gentlemen; and fine gentleman are—egad, this burgundy makes a man speak like an angel.—Come, come, madam, ake it, and put it to what use you please.

Angel. I'll use it as I would the base unworthy giver—thus. [*Throws down the purse and stamps upon it.*

Sir Har. [*Aside.*] I have no mind to meddle in state affairs; but these women will make me a parliament man 'spite of my teeth, on purpose to bring in a bill against their extortion. She tramples underfoot that deity which all the world adores.—Oh, the blooming pride of beautiful eighteen! Psha, I'll talk to her no longer; I'll make my markets with the old gentlewoman; she knows business better.—[*Goes to the door, and calls*] Here, you friend, pray desire the old lady to walk in.—Heark'ee, by Gad, madam, I'll tell your mother.

Re-enter Lady Darling.

Lady Dar. Well, sir Harry, and how d'ye like my daughter, pray?

Sir Har. Like her, madam!—Heark'ee, will you take it?—Why, faith, madam!—Take the money, I say, or egad, all's out.

Angel. All shall out; sir, you're a scandal to the name of gentleman.

Sir Har. With all my heart, madam.—In short, madam, your daughter has used me somewhat too familiarly, though I have treated her like a woman of quality.

Lady Dar. How, sir!

Sir Har. Why, madam, I have offered her a hundred guineas.

Lady Dar. A hundred guineas! upon what score?

Sir Har. Upon what score! Lord! Lord! how these old women love to hear bawdy! Why, faith, madam, I have ne'er a *double-entendre* ready at present but I'll sing you a song. [*Sings.*

Behold the goldfinches, tall al de rall,
And a man of my inches, tall al de rall;
You shall take 'em, believe me, tall al de rall,
If you will give me your—tall al de rall.

A modish minuet, madam, that's all.

Lady Dar. Sir, I don't understand you.

Sir Har. [*Aside.*] Ay, she will have it in plain terms.—[*Aloud.*] Then, madam, in downright English, I offered your daughter a hundred guineas, to—

Angel. Hold, sir, stop your abusive tongue! too loose for modest ears to bear. Madam, I did before suspect that his designs were base, now they're too plain; this knight, this mighty man of wit and humours, is made a tool to a knave: Vizard has sent him of a bully's errand, to affront a woman; but I scorn the abuse, and him that offered it.

Lady Dar. How, sir, come to affront us! d'ye know who we are, sir?

Sir Har. Know who ye are! why, your daughter there is, Mr. Vizard's cousin, I suppose:—and for you, madam,—[*Aside.*] now to call her procuress *à la mode France* [Aloud] *J'estime votre occupation.*

Lady Dar. Pray, sir, speak English.

Sir Har. [*Aside.*] Then to define her office, *à la mode Londres!*—[*Aloud.*] I suppose your ladyship to be one of those civil, obliging, discreet, old gentlewomen, who keep their visiting days for the entertainment of their presenting friends, whom they treat with imperial tea, a private room, and a pack of cards. Now I suppose you do understand me.

Lady Dar. This is beyond sufferance! But say, thou abusive man, what injury have you ere received from me or mine, thus to engage you in this scandalous aspersion?

Angel. Yes, sir, what cause, what motives, could induce you thus to debase yourself below your rank?

Sir Har. Heyday! Now dear Roxana, and you my fair Statira, be not so very heroic in your styles; Vizard's letter may resolve you, and answer all the impertinent questions you have made me.

Lady Dar. Angel. We appeal to that.

Sir Har. And I'll stand to't; he read it to me, and the contents were pretty plain, I thought.

Angel. Here, sir, peruse it, and see how much we are injured, and you deceived.

Sir Har. [*Opening the letter.*] But hold, madam—[*To* Lady DARLING] before I read, I'll make some condition. Mr. Vizard says here, that I won't scruple thirty or forty pieces. Now, madam, if you have clapped in another cipher to the account, and made it three or four hundred, by Gad, I will not stand to't.

Angel. Now, can't I tell whether disdain or anger be the most just resentment for this injury. [*Aside.*

Lady Dar. The letter, sir, shall answer you.

Sir Har. Well then!—[Reads.] *Out of my earnest inclination to serve your ladyship, and my cousin Angelica*—Ay, ay, the very words, I can say it by heart—*I have sent sir Harry Wildair—to court my cousin.*—What the devil's this?—*Sent Sir Harry Wildair to court my cousin!*—He read to me quite a different thing.—*He's a gentleman of great parts and fortune*—He's a son of a whore, and a rascal!—*And would make your daughter very happy in a husband.*—[*Whistles.*] Oh, poor sir Harry! what have the angry stars designed?

[*Looks foolish, and hums a song.*

Angel. Now, sir, I hope you need no instigation to redress our wrongs, since even the injury points the way.

Lady Dar. Think, sir, that our blood for many generations has run in the purest channel of unsullied honour.

Sir Har. Ay, madam. [*Bows to her.*

Angel. Consider what a tender blossom is female reputation, which the least air of foul detraction blasts.

Sir Har. Yes, madam. [*Bows to* ANGELICA.

Lady Dar. Call then to mind your rude and scandalous behaviour.

Sir Har. Right, madam. [*Bows again.*

Angel. Remember the base price you offered me. [*Exit.*

Sir Har. Very true, madam.—Was ever man so catechised?

Lady Dar. Then think that Vizard, villain Vizard, caused all this, yet lives: that's all, farewell! [*Going.*

Sir Har. Stay, madam, one word. Is there no other way to redress your wrongs, but by fighting?

Lady Dar. Only one, sir, which if you can think of, you may do; you know the business I entertained you for.

Sir Har. I understand you, madam.—[*Exit* Lady DARLING.] Here am I brought to a very pretty dilemma; I must commit murder or commit matrimony! Which is best, now? a licence from Doctors' Commons, or a sentence from the Old Bailey? If I kill my man, the law hangs me; if I marry my woman, I shall hang myself.—But, damn it! cowards dare fight; I'll marry, that's the most daring action of the two. So, my dear cousin Angelica, have at you. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Newgate.*

CLINCHER Senior *discovered alone.*

Clinch. Sen. How severe and melancholy are Newgate reflections! Last week my father died; yesterday I turned beau; to-day I am laid by the heels, and to-morrow shall be hung by the neck.—I was agreeing with a bookseller about printing an account of my journey through France to Italy; but now, the history of my travels through Holborn to Tyburn—*The last and dying speech of Beau Clincher, that was going to the Jubilee.—Come, a halfpenny a piece!*—a sad sound, a sad sound, faith! 'Tis one way to have a man's death make a great noise in the world.

Enter Alderman SMUGGLER *and* Jailer.

Smug. Well, friend, I have told you who I am: so send these letters into Thames-street, as directed; they are to gentlemen that will bail me.—[*Exit* Jailer.] Eh! this Newgate is a very populous place: here's robbery and repentance in every corner.—Well, friend, what are you? a cut-throat or a bum-bailiff?

Clinch. Sen. What are you, mistress? a bawd, or a witch? Hearkee, if you are a witch, d'ye see, I'll give you a hundred pounds to mount me on a broom-staff, and whip me away to the Jubilee.

Smug. The Jubilee! Oh, you young rakehell, what brought you here?

Clinch. Sen. Ah, you old rogue, what brought you here, if you go to that?

Smug. I knew, sir, what your powdering, your prinking, your dancing, and your frisking, would come to.

Clinch. Sen. And I knew what your cozening, your extortion, and your smuggling, would come to.

Smug. Ay, sir, you must break your indentures, and run to the devil in a full-bottom wig, must you?

Clinch. Sen. Ay, sir, and you must put off your gravity, and run to the devil in petticoats? You design to swing in masquerade, master, d'ye?

Smug. Ay, you must go to the plays, too, sirrah; Lord! Lord! what business has a prentice at a playhouse, unless it be to hear his master made a cuckold, and his mistress a whore! 'Tis ten to one now, but some malicious poet has my character upon the stage within this month. 'Tis a hard matter now that an honest sober man can't sin in private for this plaguy stage. I gave an honest gentleman five guineas myself towards writing a book against it: and it has done no good, we see.

Clinch. Sen. Well, well, master, take courage; our comfort is, we have lived together, and shall die together: only with this difference, that I have lived like a fool, and shall die like a knave; and you have lived like a knave, and shall die like a fool.

Smug. No, sirrah! I have sent a messenger for my clothes, and shall get out immediately, and shall be upon your jury by and by.—Go to prayers you rogue! go to prayers! [*Exit.*

Clinch. Sen. Prayers! 'tis a hard taking when a man must say grace to the gallows. Ah, this cursed intriguing! Had I swung handsomely in a silken garter now, I had died in my duty; but to hang in hemp, like the vulgar, 'tis very ungenteel.

Enter TIM ERRAND.

A reprieve! a reprieve! Thou dear, dear—damned rogue, where have you been? thou art the most welcome—son of a whore! where's my clothes?

Tim. Sir, I see where mine are: come, sir, strip, sir, strip!

Clinch. Sen. What, sir! will you abuse a gentleman?

Tim. A gentleman! ha! ha! ha! D'ye know where you are, sir? we're all gentlemen here. I stand up for liberty and property. Newgate's a commonwealth. No courtier has business among us. Come, sir!

Clinch. Sen. Well, but stay, stay till I send for my own clothes: I shall get out presently.

Tim. No, no, sir! I'll ha' you into the dungeon, and uncase you.

Clinch. Sen. Sir, you can't master me; for I'm twenty thousand strong. [*Exeunt struggling.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* Lady DARLING'S *House.*

Enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR *with letters,* Footmen *following.*

Sir Har. Here, fly all around, and bear these as directed;—you to Westminster, you to St. James's, and you into the city. Tell all my friends a bridegroom's joy invites their presence. Look all of ye like bridegrooms also: all appear with hospitable looks, and bear a welcome in your faces. Tell 'em I'm married. If any ask to whom, make no reply, but tell 'em that I'm married, that joy shall crown the day, and love the night. Begone! fly! [*Exeunt* Footmen *running.*

Enter Colonel STANDARD.

A thousand welcomes, friend! my pleasure's now complete, since I can share it with my friend. Brisk joy shall bound from me to you; then back again; and like the sun grow warmer by reflexion!

Stand. You're always pleasant, sir Harry; but this transcends yourself! whence proceeds it?

Sir Har. Canst thou not guess, my friend? Whence flows all earthly joy? What is the life of man and soul of pleasure?—woman! What fires the heart with transport, and the soul with raptures?—lovely woman! What is the masterstroke and smile of the creation, but charming, virtuous woman? When nature, in the general composition, first brought woman forth, like a flushed poet ravished with his fancy, with ecstacy she blessed the fair production!—Methinks, my friend, you relish not my joy; what is the cause?

Stand. Canst thou not guess? What is the bane of man and scourge of life, but woman? What is the heathenish idol man sets up, and is damned for worshipping?—treacherous woman. What are those, whose eyes, like basilisks, shine beautiful for sure destruction, whose smiles are dangerous as the grin of fiends, but false, deluding woman? Woman! whose composition inverts humanity: their body's heavenly, but their souls are clay!

Sir Har. Come, come, colonel, this is too much. I know your wrongs received from Lurewell may excuse your resentments against her: but 'tis unpardonable to charge the failings of a single woman upon the whole sex. I have found one, whose virtues—

Stand. So have I, sir Harry; I have found one, whose pride's above yielding to a prince. And if lying, dissembling, perjury, and falsehood, be no breaches in woman's honour, she's as innocent as infancy.

Sir Har. Well, colonel, I find your opinion grows stronger by opposition: I shall now therefore waive the argument, and only beg you for this day to make a show of complaisance at least.—Here comes my charming bride.

Enter Lady DARLING *and* ANGELICA.

Stand. [*Saluting* ANGELICA.] I wish you, madam, all the joys of love and fortune.

Enter CLINCHER Junior.

Clinch. Jun. Gentlemen and ladies, I'm just upon the spur, and have only a minute to take my leave.

Sir Har. Whither are you bound, sir?

Clinch. Jun. Bound, sir! I'm going to the Jubilee, sir.

Lady Dar. Bless me, cousin! how came you by these clothes?

Clinch. Jun. Clothes! ha! ha! ha! the rarest jest! ha! ha! ha! I shall burst, by Jupiter Ammon, I shall burst!

Lady Dar. What's the matter, cousin?

Clinch. Jun. The matter! ha! ha! ha! Why, an honest porter—ha! ha! ha!—has knocked out my brother's brains, ha! ha! ha!

Sir Har. A very good jest, i'faith! ha! ha! ha!

Clinch. Jun. Ay, sir, but the best jest of all is, he knocked out his brains with a hammer, and so he is as dead as a door-nail, ha! ha! ha!

Lady Dar. And do you laugh, wretch?

Clinch. Jun. Laugh! ha! ha! ha!—Let me see e'er a younger brother in England that won't laugh at such a jest.

Angel. You appeared a very sober pious gentleman some hours ago.

Clinch. Jun. Psha! I was a fool then; but now, madam, I'm a wit: I can rake now. As for your part, madam, you might have had me once: but now, madam, if you should chance fall to eating chalk, or gnawing the sheets, 'tis none of my fault. Now, madam, I have an estate, and I must go to the Jubilee.

Enter CLINCHER Senior *in a blanket.*

Clinch. Sen. Must you so, rogue! must ye?—You will go to the Jubilee, will you?

Clinch. Jun. A ghost! a ghost!—Send for the dean and chapter presently.

Clinch. Sen. A ghost! no, no, sirrah; I'm an elder brother, rogue!

Clinch. Jun. I don't care a farthing for that; I'm sure you're dead in law.

Clinch. Sen. Why so, sirrah? why so?

Clinch. Jun. Because, sir, I can get a fellow to swear he knocked out your brains.

Sir Har. An odd way of swearing a man out of his life!

Clinch. Jun. Smell him, gentlemen; he has a deadly scent about him!

Clinch. Sen. Truly, the apprehensions of death may have made me savour a little! O Lord! the colonel!—The apprehension of him may make me savour worse, I'm afraid. [*Aside.*

Clinch. Jun. In short, sir, were you ghost, or brother, or devil, I will go to the Jubilee, by Jupiter Ammon!

Stand. Go to the Jubilee! go to the bear-garden! The travel of such fools as you doubly injures our country; you expose our native follies, which ridicules us among strangers; and return fraught only with their vices, which you vend here for fashionable gallantry. A travelling fool is as dangerous as a homebred villain. Get you to your native plough and cart; converse with animals like yourselves—sheep and oxen; men are creatures you don't understand.

Sir Har. Let 'em alone, colonel, their folly will be now diverting.—Come, gentlemen, we'll dispute this point some other time; I hear some fiddles tuning, let's hear how they can entertain us.—Be pleased to sit.

[*Here singing and dancing; after which a* Footman *enters and whispers* Sir HARRY WILDAIR.

Sir Har. [*To* Lady DARLING.] Madam, shall I beg you to entertain the company in the next room for a moment?

Lady Dar. With all my heart.—Come, gentlemen. [*Exeunt all but* Sir HARRY WILDAIR.

Sir Har. A lady to inquire for me! Who can this be?

Enter Lady LUREWELL.

Oh, madam, this favour is beyond my expectation, to come uninvited to dance at my wedding!—What d'ye gaze at, madam?

Lady Lure. A monster!—If thou art married, thou'rt the most perjured wretch that e'er avouched deceit!

Sir Har. Heyday! why, madam, I'm sure I never swore to marry you! I made, indeed, a slight promise, upon condition of your granting me a small favour; but you would not consent, you know.

Lady Lure. [*Aside.*] How he upbraids me with my shame!—[*Aloud.*] Can you deny your binding vows. When this appears a witness 'gainst your falsehood? [*Showing a ring.*

Methinks the motto of this sacred pledge
Should flash confusion in your guilty face!
Read, read here the binding words of love and honour;
Words not unknown to your perfidious eyes,
Though utter strangers to your treacherous heart!

Sir Har. The woman's stark staring mad, that's certain!

Lady Lure. Was it maliciously designed to let me find my misery when past redress? to let me know you, only to know you false? Had not cursed chance showed me the surprising motto, I had been happy. The first knowledge I had of you was fatal to me, and this second worse.

Sir Har. What the devil's all this! Madam, I'm not at leisure for raillery at present; I have weighty affairs upon my hands; the business of pleasure, madam—any other time— [*Going.*

Lady Lure. Stay, I conjure you, stay!

Sir Har. Faith, I can't! my bride expects me. —But hark'ee, when the honeymoon is over, about a month or two hence, I may do you a small favour. [*Exit.*

Lady Lure. Grant me some wild expressions, Heavens, or I shall burst! Woman's weakness, man's falsehood, my own shame, and love's disdain, at once swell up my breast!—Words, words, or I shall burst! [*Going.*

Re-enter Colonel STANDARD.

Stand. Stay, madam, you need not shun my sight; for if you are perfect woman, you have confidence to outface a crime, and bear the charge of guilt without a blush.

Lady Lure. The charge of guilt!—What, making a fool of you? I've done't, and glory in the act! the height of female justice were to make you all hang or drown, dissembling to the prejudice of men is virtue; and every look, or sign, or smile, or tear, that can deceive is meritorious.

Stand. Very pretty principles truly! If there be truth in woman, 'tis now in thee.—Come, madam, you know that you're discovered, and being sensible you can't escape, you would now turn to bay.—That ring, madam, proclaims you guilty.

Lady Lure. O monster! villain! perfidious villain! has he told you?

Stand. I'll tell it you, and loudly too.

Lady Lure. Oh, name it not!—Yes, speak it out, 'tis so just a punishment for putting faith in man, that I will bear it all; and let credulous maids, that trust their honour to the tongues of men, thus hear their shame proclaimed.—Speak now what his busy scandal, and your improving malice, both dare utter.

Stand. Your falsehood can't be reached by malice nor by satire; your actions are the justest libel on your fame. Your words, your looks, your tears,

I did believe in spite of common fame: nay, against my own eyes I still maintained your truth. I imagined Wildair's boasting of your favours to be the pure result of his own vanity. At last he urged your taking presents of him; as a convincing proof of which you yesterday from him received that ring:—which ring, that I might be sure he gave it, I lent him for that purpose.

Lady Lure. Ha! you lent him for that purpose!

Stand. Yes, yes, madam, I lent him for that purpose—no denying it.—I know it well, for I have worn it long, and desire you now, madam, to restore it to the just owner.

Lady Lure. The just owner! think, sir, think but of what importance 'tis to own it. If you have love and honour in your soul, 'tis then most justly yours; if not, you are a robber, and have stolen it basely.

Stand. Ha! your words, like meeting flints, have struck a light to show me something strange.—But tell me instantly, is not your real name Manly?

Lady Lure. Answer me first, did not you receive this ring about twelve years ago?

Stand. I did.

Lady Lure. And were not you about that time entertained two nights at the house of sir Oliver Manly in Oxfordshire?

Stand. I was! I was!—[*Runs to her, and embraces her.*] The blest remembrance fires my soul with transport—I know the rest—you are the charming she, and I the happy man.

Lady Lure. How has blind Fortune stumbled on the right!—But where have you wandered since?—'Twas cruel to forsake me.

Stand. The particulars of my fortune were too tedious now; but to discharge myself from the stain of dishonour, I must tell you, that immediately upon my return to the university, my elder brother and I quarrelled. My father, to prevent farther mischief, posts me away to travel: I writ to you from London, but fear the letter came not to your hands.

Lady Lure. I never had the least account of you, by letter or otherwise.

Stand. Three years I lived abroad, and at my return, found you were gone out of the kingdom; though none could tell me whither. Missing you thus, I went to Flanders, served my king till the peace commenced; then fortunately going on board at Amsterdam, one ship transported us both to England. At the first sight I loved, though ignorant of the hidden cause.—You may remember, madam, that talking once of marriage, I told you I was engaged; to your dear self I meant.

Lady Lure. Then men are still most generous and brave—and to reward your truth, an estate of three thousand pounds a year waits your acceptance; and if I can satisfy you in my past conduct, and the reasons that engaged me to deceive all men, I shall expect the honourable performance of your promise, and that you would stay with me in England.

Stand. Stay!—not fame nor glory e'er shall part us more. My honour can be nowhere more concerned than here.

Re-enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR, ANGELICA, CLINCHER Senior, *and* CLINCHER Junior.

Oh, sir Harry, Fortune has acted miracles! The story's strange and tedious, but all amounts to this: that woman's mind is charming as her person, and I am made a convert too to beauty.

Sir Har. I wanted only this to make my pleasure perfect.

[*Enter* Alderman SMUGGLER.

Smug. So, gentlemen and ladies, is my gracious nephew Vizard among ye?

Sir Har. Sir, he dares not show his face among such honourable company, for your gracious nephew is—

Smug. What, sir? have a care what you say—

Sir Har. A villain, sir.

Smug. With all my heart:—I'll pardon you the beating me for that very word. And pray, sir Harry, when you see him next, tell him this news from me, that I have disinherited him, that I will leave him as poor as a disbanded quarter-master. And this is the positive and stiff resolution of threescore and ten; an age that sticks as obstinately to its purpose, as the old fashion of its cloak.

Sir Har. [*To* ANGELICA.] You see, madam, how industriously Fortune has punished his offence to you.

Angel. I can scarcely, sir, reckon it an offence, considering the happy consequence of it.

Smug. O sir Harry, he is as hypocritical—

Lady Lure. As yourself, Mr. Alderman: how fares my good old nurse, pray sir?

Smug. O madam, I shall be even with you before I part with your writings and money, that I have in my hands!

Stand. A word with you, Mr. Alderman; do you know this pocket-book?

Smug. [*Aside.*] O Lord, it contains an account of all my secret practices in trading!—[*Aloud.*] How came you by it, sir?

Stand. Sir Harry here dusted it out of your pocket, at this lady's house yesterday. It contains an account of some secret practices in your merchandising; among the rest the counterpart of an agreement with a correspondent at Bordeaux, about transporting French wine in Spanish casks.—First return this lady all her writings, then I shall consider whether I shall lay your proceedings before the parliament or not; whose justice will never suffer your smuggling to go unpunished.

Smug. Oh, my poor ship and cargo!

Clinch. Sen. Hark'ee, master, you had as good come along with me to the Jubilee now.

Angel. Come, Mr. Alderman, for once let a woman advise. Would you be thought an honest man, banish covetousness, that worst gout of age; avarice is a poor pilfering quality of the soul, and will as certainly cheat, as a thief would steal.—Would you be thought a reformer of the times, be less severe in your censures, less rigid in your precepts, and more strict in your example.

Sir Har. Right, madam; virtue flows freer from imitation than compulsion; of which, colonel, your conversion and mine are just examples.

In vain are musty morals taught in schools,
By rigid teachers, and as rigid rules,
Where virtue with a frowning aspect stands,
And frights the pupil from its rough commands.
But woman,—
Charming woman, can true converts make;
We love the precepts for the teacher's sake.
Virtue in them appears so bright, so gay,
We hear with transport, and with pride obey.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE,

SPOKEN BY MR. WILKS.

Now all depart, each his respective way,
To spend an evening's chat upon the play;
Some to Hippolito's; one homeward goes,
And one with loving she retires to the Rose.
The amorous pair in all things frank and free,
Perhaps may save the play—in number Three.
The tearing spark, if Phillis aught gainsays,
Breaks the drawer's head, kicks her, and murders Bays.
To coffee some retreat to save their pockets,
Others, more generous, damn the play at Locket's;
But there, I hope, the author's fears are vain,
Malice ne'er spoke in generous champagne.
That poet merits an ignoble death,
Who fears to fall over a brave Monteth.
The privilege of wine we only ask,
You'll taste again before you damn the flask.
Our author fears not you; but those he may,
Who in cold blood murder a man in tea.
Those men of spleen, who fond the world should know it,
Sit down, and for their twopence damn a poet.
Their criticism's good, that we can say for't,
They understand a play—too well to pay for't.
From box to stage, from stage to box they run,
First steal the play, then damn it when they've done.
But now, to know what fate may us betide,
Among our friends, in Cornhill and Cheapside:
But those, I think, have but one rule for plays;
They'll say they're good, if so the world says.
If it should please them and their spouses know it,
They straight inquire what kind of man's the poet.
But from side-box we dread a fearful doom,
All the good-natured beaux are gone to Rome.
The ladies' censure I'd almost forgot,
Then for a line or two to engage their vote:
But that way's old, below our author's aim,
No less than his whole play is compliment to them.
For their sakes then the play can't miss succeeding,
Though critics may want wit, they have good breeding.
They won't, I'm sure, forfeit the ladies' graces,
By showing their ill-nature to their faces,
Our business with good manners may be done,
Flatter us here, and damn us when you're gone.

SIR HARRY WILDAIR;

BEING THE SEQUEL OF THE

TRIP TO THE JUBILEE.

A Comedy.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE EARL OF ALBEMARLE, &c.

KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER.

MY LORD,—My pen is both a novice in poetry, and a stranger at court, and can no more raise itself to the style of panegyric, than it can stoop to the art of flattery; but if in the plain and simple habit of truth, it may presume to mix with that crowd of followers that daily attend upon your Lordship's favour, please to behold a stranger, with this difference, that he pays more homage to your worth, than adoration to your greatness.

This distinction, my Lord, will appear too nice and metaphysical to the world, who know your Lordship's merit and place to be so inseparable, that they can only differ as the cause from the effect; and this, my Lord, is as much beyond dispute, as that your royal master, who has made the noble choice, is the most wise and most discerning prince in the universe.

To present the world with a lively draught of your Lordship's perfections, I should enumerate the judgment, conduct, piety and courage of our great and gracious king, who can only place his favours on those shining qualifications for which his majesty is so eminently remarkable himself; but this, my Lord, will prove the business of voluminous history, and your Lordship's character must attend the fame of your great master in the memoirs of futurity, as your faithful service has hitherto accompanied the noble actions of his life.

The greatest princes in all ages have had their friends and favourites, with them to communicate and debate their thoughts, so to exercise and ripen their judgments; or sometimes to ease their cares by imparting them. The great Augustus, we read in his project of settling the unwieldy Roman conquests on a fixed basis of government, had the design laid, not in his council, but his closet; there we find him with his two friends Mæcenas and Agrippa, his favourite friends, persons of sound judgment and unquestionable fidelity, there the great question is freely and reasonably debated, without the noise of faction and constraint of formality; and there was laid that prodigious scheme of government, that soon recovered their bleeding country, healed the wounds of the civil war, blessed the empire with a lasting peace, and styled its monarch, *Pater Patriæ.*

The parallel, my Lord, is easily made; we have our Cæsar too, no less renowned than the forementioned Augustus; he first asserted our liberties at home against popery and thraldom, headed our armies abroad with bravery and success, gave peace to Europe, and security to our religion. And you, my Lord, are his Mæcenas, the private counsellor to those great transactions which have made England so formidable to its enemies, that (which I blush to own) it is grown jealous of its friends.

But here, my Lord, appears the particular wisdom and circumspection of your Lordship's conduct, that you so firmly retain the favour of your master without the envy of the subject; your moderation and even deportment between both, has secured to your Lordship the ear of the king, and the heart of the people; the nation has voted you their *good Angel* in all suits and petitions to their prince, and their success fills the three kingdoms with daily praises of your Lordship's goodness, and his majesty's grace and clemency.

And now, my Lord, give me leave humbly to beg, that among all the good actions of your Lordship's high and happy station, the encouragement of arts and literature may not be solely excluded from the influence of your favour. The polite Mæcenas, whom I presumed to make a parallel to your Lordship in the favour of his prince, had his Virgil and his Horace, and his time was mostly divided between the emperor and the poet; he so managed his stake of royal favour, that as Augustus made him great, so the Muses fixed him immortal; and Maro's excellency, my Lord, will appear the less wonder, when we consider that his pen was so cherished with bounty, and inspired by gratitude.

But I can lay no claim to the merits of so great a person for my access to your Lordship; I have only this to recommend me without art void of rhetoric, that I am a true lover of my king, and pay an unfeigned veneration to all those who are his trusty servants and faithful ministers; which infers that I am, my Lord, with all submission, your Lordship's most devoted and most obedient humble servant,

G. FARQUHAR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SIR HARRY WILDAIR.
BANTER, *Beau, a younger Brother to* SIR HARRY.
COLONEL STANDARD.
CAPTAIN FIREBALL, *a Naval Officer, Brother to* COLONEL STANDARD.
MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS, *a sharping Refugee.*
CLINCHER, *the Jubilee-Beau turned Politician.*
DICKY, *Servant to* SIR HARRY.
SHARK, *Servant to* CAPTAIN FIREBALL.

LORD BELLAMY.
REMNANT, *a Tailor.*

LADY LUREWELL.
ANGELICA.
PARLY.

Ladies, Chambermaids, Ghost, Sailor, Footmen, &c.

SCENE,—LONDON.

PROLOGUE,

Our authors have, in most their late essays,
Prologued their own, by damning other plays;
Made great harangues to teach you what was fit
To pass for humour and go down for wit.
Athenian rules must form an English piece,
And Drury-lane comply with ancient Greece.
Exactness only, such as Terence writ,
Must please our mask'd Lucretias in the pit.
Our youthful author swears he cares not a pin
For Vossius, Scaliger, Hedelin, or Rapin:
He leaves to learned pens such labour'd lays,
You are the rules by which he writes his plays.
From musty books let others take their view,
He hates dull reading, but he studies you.
First, from you beaux, his lesson is formality,
And in your footmen there—most nice morality;
To pleasure them his Pegasus must fly,
Because they judge, and lodge, three stories high.
From the front boxes he has pick'd his style,
And learns, without a blush, to make 'em smile;
A lesson only taught us by the fair,—
A waggish action, but a modest air.
Among his friends here in the pit he reads
Some rules that every modish writer needs.
He learns from every Covent-garden critic's face,
The modern forms of action, time, and place.
The action he's ashamed to name, d'ye see;
The time is seven, the place is number Three.
The masks he only reads by passant looks,
He dares not venture far into their books.
Thus, then, the pit and boxes are his schools,
Your air, your humour, his dramatic rules.
Let critics censure then, and hiss like snakes,
He gains his ends, if his light fancy takes
St. James's beaux, and Covent-garden rakes.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Park.*

Enter Colonel STANDARD *and* Captain FIREBALL *meeting.*

Stand. Ha, brother Fireball! welcome ashore. What, heart whole? limbs firm, and frigate safe?

Fire. All, all, as my fortune and friends could wish.

Stand. And what news from the Baltic?

Fire. Why, yonder are three or four young boys i' th' North, that have got globes and sceptres to play with. They fell to loggerheads about their playthings; the English came in like Robin Goodfellow, cried Boh! and made 'em be quiet.

Stand. In the next place, then, you're to congratulate my success. You have heard, I suppose, that I've married a fine lady with a great fortune.

Fire. Ay, ay; 'twas my first news upon my landing, that colonel Standard had married the fine lady Lurewell—a fine lady indeed! a very fine lady! But faith, brother, I had rather turn skipper to an Indian canoe than manage the vessel you're master of.

Stand. Why so, sir?

Fire. Because she'll run adrift with every wind that blows: she's all sail and no ballast.—Shall I tell you the character I have heard of a fine lady? A fine lady can laugh at the death of her husband, and cry for the loss of a lapdog: a fine lady is angry without a cause, and pleased without a reason: a fine lady has the vapours all the morning and the colic all the afternoon: the pride of a fine lady is above the merit of an understanding head; yet her vanity will stoop to the adoration of a peruke: and, in fine, a fine lady goes to church for fashion's sake, and to the basset-table with devotion; and her passion for gaming exceeds her vanity of being thought virtuous, or the desire of acting the contrary.—We seamen speak plain, brother.

Stand. You seamen are like your element, always tempestuous, too ruffling to handle a fine lady.

Fire. Say you so? why then, give me thy hand, honest Frank; and let the world talk on, and be damned!

Stand. The world talk, say you? what does the world talk?

Fire. Nothing, nothing at all.—They only say what's usual upon such occasions: that your wife's the greatest coquette about the court, and your worship the greatest cuckold about the city; that's all.

Stand. How, how, sir!

Fire. That she's a coquette, and you a cuckold.

Stand. She's an angel in herself, and a paradise to me.

Fire. She's an Eve in herself and a devil to you.

Stand. She's all truth and the world a liar.

Fire. Why then, egad, brother, it shall be so; I'll back again to White's, and whoever dares mutter scandal of my brother and sister, I'll dash his ratafia in's face, and call him a liar. [*Going.*

Stand. Hold, hold, sir! The world is too strong for us. Were scandal and detraction to be throughly revenged, we must murder all the beaux, and poison half the ladies. Those that have nothing else to say must tell stories: fools over burgundy, and ladies over tea, must have something that's sharp to relish their liquor; malice is the piquant sauce of such conversation, and without it their entertainment would prove mighty insipid.—Now, brother, why should we pretend to quarrel with all mankind?

Fire. Because that all mankind quarrel with us.

Stand. The worst reason in the world.—Would you pretend to devour a lion because a lion would devour you?

Fire. Yes, if I could.

Stand. Ay, that's right; if you could! But since you have neither teeth nor paws for such an encounter, lie quietly down, and perhaps the furious beast may run over you.

Fire. 'Sdeath, sir! but, I say, that whoever abuses my brother's wife, though at the back of the king's chair, he's a villain.

Stand. No, no, brother, that's a contradiction; there's no such thing as villany at court. Indeed, if the practice of courts were found in a single person, he might be styled villain with a vengeance; but number and power authorises everything, and turns the villain upon their accusers. In short, sir, every man's morals, like his religion now-a-days, pleads liberty of conscience; every man's conscience is his convenience, and we know no convenience but preferment.—As for instance, who would be so complaisant as to thank an officer for his courage, when that's the condition of his pay? and who can be so ill-natured as to blame a courtier for espousing that which is the very tenure of his livelihood?

Fire. A very good argument in a very damnable cause!—But, sir, my business is not with the court, but with you: I desire you, sir, to open your eyes; at least, be pleased to lend an ear to what I heard just now at the Chocolate-house.

Stand. Brother!

Fire. Well, sir.

Stand. Did the scandal please you when you heard it?

Fire. No.

Stand. Then why should you think it should please me? Be not more uncharitable to your friends than to yourself, sweet sir: if it made you uneasy, there's no question but it will torment me, who am so much nearer concerned.

Fire. But would you not be glad to know your enemies?

Stand. Psha! if they abused me they are my friends, my intimate friends, my table company, and pot companions.

Fire. Why then, brother, the devil take all your acquaintance! You were so rallied, so torn! there were a hundred ranks of sneering white teeth drawn upon your misfortunes at once: which so mangled your wife's reputation, that she can never patch up her honour while she lives.

Stand. And their teeth were very white, you say?

Fire. Very white! blood, sir, I say, they mangled your wife's reputation.

Stand. And I say, that if they touch my wife's reputation with nothing but their teeth, her honour will be safe enough.

Fire. Then you won't hear it?

Stand. Not a syllable. Listening after slander, is laying nets for serpents, which, when you have caught, will sting you to death: let 'em spit their venom among themselves, and it hurts nobody.

Fire. Lord! Lord! how cuckoldom and contentment go together!—Fy, fy, sir! consider you have been a soldier, dignified by a noble post; distinguished by brave actions, an honour to your nation, and a terror to your enemies.—Hell! that a man who has stormed Namur, should become the jest of a coffee-table!—The whole house was clearly taken up with the two important questions, whether the colonel was a cuckold or Kid a pirate.

Stand. This I cannot bear. [*Aside.*

Fire. Ay, (says a sneering coxcomb,) the colonel has made his fortune with a witness; he has secured himself a good estate in this life, and a reversion in the world to come. Then (replies another) I presume he's obliged to your lordship's bounty for the latter part of the settlement. There are others (says a third) that have played with my lady Lurewell at picquet, besides my lord; I have capotted her myself two or three times in an evening.

Stand. O matrimonial patience assist me!

Fire. Matrimonial patience! matrimonial pestilence!—Shake off these drowsy chains that fetter your resentments. If your wife has wronged ye, pack her off, and let her person be as public as her character: if she be honest, revenge her quarrel.—I can stay no longer: this is my hour of attendance at the Navy Office; I'll come and dine with you; in the meantime, revenge; think on't. [*Exit.*

Stand. How easy is it to give advice, and how difficult to observe it! If your wife has wronged ye, pack her off. Ay, but how! The Gospel drives the matrimonial nail, and the law clinches it so very hard, that to draw it again would tear the work to pieces.—That her intentions have wronged me, here's a young bawd can witness.

Enter PARLY, *running across the stage.*

Here, here, Mrs. Parly; whither so fast?

Par. Oh lord! my master!—Sir, I was running to mademoiselle Furbelo, the French milliner, for a new burgundy for my lady's head.

Stand. No, child, you're employed about an old-fashioned garniture for your master's head, if I mistake not your errand.

Par. Oh, sir! there's the prettiest fashion lately come over! so airy, so French, and all that! The pinners are double ruffled with twelve plaits of a side, and open all from the face; the hair is frizzled all up round the head, and stands as stiff as a bodkin. Then the favourites hang loose upon the temples, with a languishing lock in the middle. Then the caul is extremely wide, and over all is a coronet raised very high, and all the lappets behind.—I must fetch it presently. [*Going.*

Stand. Hold a little, child; I must talk with you.

Par. Another time, sir, my lady stays for it.

Stand. One question first:—what wages does my wife give you?

Par. Ten pound a year, sir; which Gad knows is little enough, considering how I slave from place to place upon her occasions. But, then, sir, my perquisites are considerable; I make above two hundred pound a year of her old clothes.

Stand. [*Aside.*] Two hundred pound a year by her old clothes! what then must her new ones cost?—[*Aloud.*] But what do you get by visiting gallants and picquet?

Par. About a hundred pound more.

Stand. [*Aside.*] A hundred pound more! Now who can expect to find a lady's woman honest, when she gets so much by being a jade?—[*Aloud.*] What religion are you of, Mrs. Parly?

Par. I can't tell.

Stand. What was your father?

Par. A mountebank.

Stand. Where were you born?

Par. In Holland.

Stand. Were you ever christened?

Par. No.

Stand. How came that?

Par. My parents were Anabaptists: they died before I was dipped; I then forsook their religion, and ha' got ne'er a new one since.

Stand. I'm very sorry, madam, that I had not the honour to know the worth of your extraction sooner, that I might have paid you the respect due to your quality.

Par. Sir, your humble servant. [*Curtseys.*

Stand. Have you any principles?

Par. Five hundred.

Stand. Have you lost your maidenhead?—[*She puts on her mask, and nods.*] Do you love money?

Par. Yaw, min Heer.

Stand. Well, Mrs. Parly, now you have been so free with me, I tell you what you must trust to in return: never to come near my house again. Begone, monster! fly!—Hell and furies! never christened! her father a mountebank!—

Par. Lord, sir, you need not be so furious. Never christened! what then? I may be a very good Christian for all that I suppose.—Turn me off! sir, you shan't. Meddle with your fellows; 'tis my lady's business to order her women.

Stand. [*Aside.*] Here's a young whore for you now! A sweet companion for my wife! Where there's such a hellish confidante, there must be damnable secrets.—[*Aloud.*] Begone, I say! My wife shall turn you away.

Par. Sir, she won't turn me away, she shan't turn me away, nor she can't turn me away. Sir, I say, she dare not turn me away.

Stand. Why, you jade? why?

Par. Because I'm the mistress, not she.

Stand. You the mistress!

Par. Yes, I know all her secrets; and let her offer to turn me off if she dares.

Stand. What secrets do you know?

Par. Humph!—Tell a wife's secrets to her husband!—very pretty, 'faith!—sure, sir, you don't think me such a Jew? Though I was never christened, I have more religion than that comes to.

Stand. Are you faithful to your lady for affection or interest?

Par. Shall I tell you a christian lie, or a pagan truth?

Stand. Come, truth for once.

Par. Why, then, interest, interest. I have a great soul, which nothing can gain but a great bribe.

Stand. Well, though thou art a devil, thou art a very honest one. Give me thy hand, wench. Should not interest make you faithful to me as much as to others?

Par. Honest to you! marry for what? You gave me indeed two pitiful pieces the day you were married, but not a stiver since. One gallant gives me ten guineas, another a watch, another a pair of pendants, a fourth a diamond ring; and my noble master gives me—his linen to mend.—Faugh!—I'll tell you a secret, sir: stinginess to servants makes more cuckolds, than ill-nature to wives.

Stand. And am I a cuckold, Parly?

Par. No, faith, not yet; though in a very fair way of having the dignity conferred upon you very suddenly.

Stand. Come, girl, you shall be my pensioner; you shall have a glorious revenue; for every guinea that you get for keeping of a secret, I'll give you two for revealing it. You shall find a husband once in your life outdo all your gallants in generosity. Take their money, child, take all their bribes: give 'em hopes, make 'em assignations; serve your lady faithfully, but tell all to me. By which means, she will be kept chaste, you will grow rich, and I shall preserve my honour.

Par. But what security shall I have for performance of articles?

Stand. Ready payment, child.

Par. Then give me earnest.

Stand. Five guineas. [*Gives her money.*

Par. Are they right? No Gray's-Inn pieces amongst 'em.—All right as my leg.—Now, sir, I'll give you an earnest of my service. Who d'ye think is come to town?

Stand. Who?

Par. Your old friend, sir Harry Wildair.

Stand. Impossible!

Par. Yes, faith, and as gay as ever.

Stand. And has he forgot his wife so soon?

Par. Why, she has been dead now above a year.—He appeared in the Ring last night with such splendour and equipage, that he eclipsed the beaux, dazzled the ladies, and made your wife dream all night of six Flanders mares, seven French liveries, a wig like a cloak, and a hat like a shittlecock.

Stand. What are a woman's promises and oaths?

Par. Wind, wind, sir.

Stand. When I married her, how heartily did she condemn her light preceding conduct; and for the future vowed herself a perfect pattern of conjugal fidelity!

Par. She might as safely swear, sir, that this day se'nnight, at four o'clock, the wind will blow fair for Flanders. 'Tis presuming for any of us all to promise for our inclinations a whole week. Besides, sir, my lady has got the knack of coquetting it; and once a woman has got that in her head, she will have a touch on't everywhere else.

Stand. An oracle, child! But now I must make the best of a bad bargain; and since I have got you on my side, I have some hopes, that by constant disappointment and crosses in her designs, I may at last tire her into good behaviour.

Par. Well, sir, the condition of the articles being duly performed, I stand to the obligation; and will tell you farther, that by-and-by sir Harrry Wildair is to come to our house to cards, and that there is a design laid to cheat him of his money.

Stand. What company will there be besides?

Par. Why, the old set at the basset-table; my lady Lovecards and the usual company. They have made up a bank of fifteen hundred louis-d'ors among 'em; the whole design lies upon sir Harry's purse, and the French marquis, you know, constantly taillés.

Stand. Ay, the French marquis; that's one of your benefactors, Parly;—the persecution of basset in Paris furnished us with that refugee; but the character of such a fellow ought not to reflect on those who have been real sufferers for their religion. —But take no notice. Be sure only to inform me of all that passes.—There's more earnest for you: be rich and faithful. [*Exit.*

Par. I am now not only woman to the lady Lurewell, but steward to her husband, in my double capacity of knowing her secrets, and commanding his purse. A very pretty office in a family! For every guinea that I get for keeping a secret, he'll give me two for revealing it.—My comings-in, at this rate, will be worth a master in chancery's place, and many a poor Templar will be glad to marry me with half my fortune. [*Going.*

Enter DICKY, *meeting her.*

Dicky. Here's a man much fitter for your purposes.

Par. Bless me! Mr. Dicky!

Dicky. The very same in longitude and latitude; not a bit diminished, not a hair's breadth increased. —Dear Mrs. Parly give me a buss, for I'm almost starved.

Par. Why so hungry, Mr. Dicky?

Dicky. Why, I han't tasted a bit this year and half, woman; I have been wandering about all over the world, following my master, and come home to dear London but two days ago. Now the devil take me, if I had not rather kiss an English pair of pattens, than the finest lady in France.

Par. Then you're overjoyed to see London again?

Dicky. Oh! I was just dead of a consumption, till the sweet smoke of Cheapside, and the dear perfume of Fleet-ditch, made me a man again.

Par. But how came you to live with sir Harry Wildair?

Dicky. Why, seeing me a handsome personable fellow, and well qualified for a livery, he took a fancy to my figure, that was all.

Par. And what's become of your old master?

Dicky. Oh! hang me, he was a blockhead, and I turned him off, I turned him away.

Par. And were not you very sorry for the loss of your mistress, sir Harry's lady? They say, she was a very good woman.

Dicky. Oh! the sweetest woman that ever the sun shined upon. I could almost weep when I think of her. [*Wiping his eyes.*

Par. How did she die, pray? I could never hear how 'twas.

Dicky. Give me a buss then, and I'll tell ye.

Par. You shall have your wages when your work's done.

Dicky. Well then—courage!—Now for a doleful tale.—You know that my master took a freak to go see that foolish Jubilee that made such a noise among us here; and no sooner said than done; away he went, he took his fine French servants to wait on him; and left me, the poor English puppy, to wait upon his lady at home here. Well, so far, so good.—But scarce was my master's back turned, when my lady turned to sighing, and pouting, and whining, and crying; and in short fell sick upon't.

Par. Well, well; I know all this already; and that she plucked up her spirits at last, and went to follow him.

Dicky. Very well. Follow him we did, far and far, and farther than I can tell, till we came to a place called Montpelier, in France; a goodly place truly.—But Sir Harry was gone to Rome; there was our labour lost.—But, to be short, my poor lady, with the tiresomeness of travelling, fell sick —and died. [*Cries.*

Par. Poor woman!

Dicky. Ay, but that was not all: here comes the worst of the story. Those cursed barbarous devils, the French, would not let us bury her.

Par. Not bury her!

Dicky. No, she was a heretic woman, and they would not let her corpse be put in their holy ground.—Oh, damn their holy ground, for me!

Par. [*Aside.*] Now had not I better be an honest pagan, as I am, than such a christian as one of these?—[*Aloud.*] But how did you dispose the body?

Dicky. Why, there was one charitable gentlewoman that used to visit my lady in her sickness: she contrived the matter so, that she had her buried in her own private chapel. This lady and myself carried her out upon our own shoulders through a back-door, at the hour of midnight, and laid her in a grave that I dug for her with my own hands; and if we had been catched by the priests, we had gone to the gallows without the benefit of clergy.

Par. Oh, the devil take 'em!—But what did they mean by a heretic woman?

Dicky. I don't know; some sort of a cannibal, I believe. I know there are some cannibal women here in England, that come to the playhouses in masks; but let them have a care how they go to France: for they are all heretics, I believe. But I'm sure my good lady was none of these.

Par. But how did sir Harry bear the news?

Dicky. Why, you must know, that my lady after she was buried sent me—

Par. How! after she was buried!

Dicky. Psha! why Lord, mistress, you know what I mean! I went to sir Harry all the way to Rome; and where d'ye think I found him?

Par. Where?

Dicky. Why, in the middle of a monastery among a hundred and fifty nuns, playing at hot-cockles. He was surprised to see honest Dicky, you may be sure. But when I told him the sad story, he roared out a whole volley of English oaths upon the spot, and swore that he would set fire on the pope's palace for the injury done to his wife. He then flew away to his chamber, locked himself up for three days; we thought to have found him dead; but instead of that, he called for his best linen, fine wig, gilt coach; and laughing very heartily, swore again he would be revenged, and bid them drive to the nunnery; and he was revenged to some purpose.

Par. How, how, dear Mr. Dicky?

Dicky. Why, in the matter of five days he got six nuns with child, and left 'em to provide for their heretic bastards.—Ah, plague on 'em! they hate a dead heretic, but they love a piping hot warm heretic with all their hearts.—So away we came; and thus did he jog on, revenging himself at this rate through all the Catholic countries that we passed, till we came home; and now, Mrs. Parly, I fancy he has some designs of revenge too upon your lady.

Par. Who could have thought that a man of his light airy temper would have been so revengeful?

Dicky. Why, faith, I'm a little malicious too. Where's the buss you promised me, you jade?

Par. Follow me, you rogue. [*Runs off.*

Dicky. Allons! [*Follows.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Colonel STANDARD'S *House.*

Enter two Chambermaids.

1 *Cham.* Are all things set in order? the toilet fixed, the bottles and combs put in form, and the chocolate ready?

2 *Cham.* 'Tis no great matter whether they be right or not; for right or wrong we shall be sure of our lecture; I wish for my part that my time were out.

1 *Cham.* Nay, 'tis a hundred to one but we may run away before our time be half expired; and she's worse this morning than ever.—Here she comes.

Enter Lady LUREWELL.

Lady Lure. Ay, there's a couple of you indeed!—But how, how in the name of negligence could you two contrive to make a bed as mine was last night? a wrinkle on one side, and a rumple on t'other; the pillows awry, and the quilt askew. I did nothing but tumble about, and fence with the sheets all night long. Oh! my bones ache this morning as if I had lain all night on a pair of Dutch stairs.—Go, bring chocolate—and, d'ye hear? be sure to stay an hour or two at least.—[*Exeunt* Chambermaids.] Well, these English animals are so unpolished! I wish the persecution would rage a little harder, that we might have more of these French refugees among us.—These wenches are gone to Smyrna for this chocolate!—

Re-enter Chambermaids *with chocolate.*

And what made you stay so long?

1 *Cham.* I thought we did not stay at all, madam.

Lady Lure. Only an hour and a half by the slowest clock in Christendom!—And such salvers and dishes too!—The Lard be merciful to me; what have I committed, to be plagued with such animals?—Where are my new japan salvers?—Broke, o' my conscience! all to pieces, I'll lay my life on't.

2 *Cham.* No, indeed, madam, but your husband—

Lady Lure. How! husband, impudence! I'll teach you manners!—[*Gives her a box on the ear.*] Husband! Is that your Welsh breeding? han't the colonel a name of his own?

2 *Cham.* Well then, the colonel. He used 'em this morning, and we han't got 'em since.

Lady Lure. How, the colonel use my things! how dare the colonel use anything of mine?—But his campaign education must be pardoned.—And I warrant they were fisted about among his dirty levee of disbanded officers?—Faugh! the very thoughts of them fellows with their eager looks, iron swords, tied-up wigs, and tucked-in cravats, makes me sick as death.—Come, let me see.—[*Goes to take the chocolate, and starts back.*] Heavens protect me from such a sight! Lord, girl! when did you wash your hands last? And have you been pawing me all this morning with them dirty fists of yours?—[*Runs to the glass.*] I must dress all over again.—Go, take it away, I shall swoon else.—Here, Mrs. Monster, call up my tailor.—[*Exit* First Chambermaid.] And, d'ye hear? you Mrs. Hobbyhorse, see if the company be come to cards yet. [*Exit* Second Chambermaid.

Re-enter Chambermaid *with* REMNANT.

Oh, Mr. Remnant! I don't know what ails these stays you have made me; but something is the matter, I don't like 'em.

Rem. I am very sorry for that, madam. But what fault does your ladyship find?

Lady Lure. I don't know where the fault lies; but in short, I don't like 'em; I can't tell how; the things are well enough made, but I don't like 'em.

Rem. Are they too wide, madam?

Lady Lure. No.

Rem. Too strait, perhaps?

Lady Lure. Not at all! they fit me very well; but—Lard bless me! can't you tell where the fault lies?

Rem. Why truly, madam, I can't tell. But your ladyship, I think, is a little too slender for the fashion.

Lady Lure. How! too slender for the fashion, say you?

Rem. Yes, madam; there's no such thing as a good shape worn among the quality: your fine waists are clear out, clear out, madam.

Lady Lure. And why did you not plump up my stays to the fashionable size?

Rem. I made 'em to fit you, madam.

Lady Lure. Fit me! fit my monkey! What! d'ye think I wear clothes to please myself? Fit me! fit the fashion, pray; no matter for me. I thought something was the matter; I wanted of quality-air. Pray, Mr. Remnant, let me have a bulk of quality, a spreading contour. I do remember now, the ladies in the apartments, the birth-night, were most of 'em two yards about. Indeed, sir, if you contrive my things any more with your scanty chambermaid's air, you shall work no more for me.

Rem. I shall take care to please your ladyship for the future. [*Exit.*

Enter Footman.

Foot. Madam, my master desires—

Lady Lure. Hold, hold, fellow! for Gad's sake, hold! If thou touch my clothes with that tobacco-breath of thine, I shall poison the whole drawing-room! Stand at the door pray, and speak.

[Footman *goes to the door and speaks.*

Foot. My master, madam, desires—

Lady Lure. Oh, hideous!—Now the rascal bellows so loud that he tears my head to pieces!—[*To* Chambermaid.] Here, Awkwardness, go take the booby's message, and bring it to me.

[Chambermaid *goes to the door, whispers, and returns.*

Cham. My master desires to know how your ladyship rested last night, and if you are pleased to admit of a visit this morning.

Lady Lure. Ay.—[*Exeunt* Chambermaid *and* Footman.] Why, this is civil! 'Tis an insupportable toil, though, for women of quality to model their husbands to good breeding.

Enter Colonel Standard.

Stand. Good-morrow, my dearest angel! how have you rested last night?

Lady Lure. Lard, Lard, colonel! what a room have you made me here with your dirty feet!—Bless me, sir! will you never be reclaimed from your slovenly campaign-airs? 'Tis the most unmannerly thing in nature to make a sliding-bow in a lady's chamber with dirty shoes; it writes rudeness upon the boards!

Stand. [*Aside.*] A very odd kind of reception this, truly!—[*Aloud.*] I'm very sorry, madam, that the offences of my feet should create an aversion to my company: but for the future, I shall honour your ladyship's apartment as the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and always come in barefoot.

Lady Lure. Sepulchre at Jerusalem! your compliment, sir, is very! far-fetched. But your feet indeed have a very travelling air.

Stand. Come, come, my dear, no serious disputes upon trifles; since you know I never contend with you in matters of consequence. You are still mistress of your fortune, and marriage has only made you more absolute in your pleasure, by adding one faithful servant to your desires.—Come, clear your brow of that uneasy chagrin, and let that pleasing air take place that first ensnared my heart! I have invited some gentlemen to dinner, whose friendships deserve a welcome look. Let their entertainment show how blessed you have made me, by a plentiful fortune and the love of so agreeable a creature.

Lady Lure. Your friends, I suppose, are all men of quality?

Stand. Madam, they are officers, and men of honour.

Lady Lure. Officers, and men of honour! that is, they will daub the stairs with their feet, stain all the rooms with their wine, talk bawdy to my woman, rail at the parliament, then at one another, fall to cutting of throats, and break all my china.

Stand. Admitting that I kept such company, 'tis unkind in you, madam, to talk so severely of my friends.—But my brother, my dear, is just come from his voyage, and will be here to pay his respects to you.

Lady Lure. Sir, I shall not be at leisure to entertain a person of his Wapping education, I can assure you.

Enter Parly, *and whispers* Lady Lurewell.

Sir, I have some business with my woman; you may entertain your sea-monster by yourself; you may command a dish of pork and pease, with a bowl of punch, I suppose; and so, sir, much good may do you.—Come, Parly. [*Exit with* Parly.

Stand. Hell and furies!

Enter Captain Fireball.

Fire. With all my heart.—Where's your wife, brother?—How now, man, what's the matter?—Is dinner ready?

Stand. No.—I don't know.—Hang it, I'm sorry that I invited you: for you must know that my wife is very much out of order; taken dangerously ill of a sudden. So that—

Fire. Psha! nothing, nothing but a marriage qualm; breeding children, or breeding mischief. Where is she, man? Prithee let me see her; I long to see this fine lady you have got.

Stand. Upon my word she's very ill, and can't see anybody.

Fire. So ill that she can't see anybody! What, she's not in labour sure! I tell you, I will see her.—Where is she? [*Looking about.*

Stand. No, no, brother; she's gone abroad to take the air.

Fire. What the devil! dangerous sick, and gone out! So sick that she'll see nobody within, yet gone abroad to see all the world!—Ay, you have made your fortunes with a vengeance!—Then, brother, you shall dine with me at Locket's; I hate these family-dinners, where a man's obliged to, O Lard, madam!—No apology, dear sir!—'Tis very good indeed, madam!—For yourself, dear madam!—Where, between the rubbed floor under foot, the china in one corner, and the glasses in another, a man can't make two strides without hazard of his life. Commend me to a boy and a bell; Coming, coming, sir! Much noise, no attendance, and a dirty room, where I may eat like a horse, drink like a fish, and swear like a devil. Hang your family dinners! come along with me.

Enter Banter, *who seeing them, seems to retire.*

Stand. Who's that? Come in, sir. Your business, pray sir?

Ban. Perhaps, sir, it may not be so proper to inform you; for you appear to be as great a stranger here as myself.

Fire. Come, come away, brother; he has some business with your wife.

Ban. His wife! Gadso! a pretty fellow, a very pretty fellow, a likely fellow, and a handsome fellow; I find nothing like a monster about him; I would fain see his forehead though.—Sir, your humble servant.

Stand. Yours, sir.—But why d'ye stare so in my face?

Ban. I was told, sir, that the lady Lurewell's husband had something very remarkable over his eyes, by which he might be known.

Fire. Mark that, brother!

[*Aside to* Colonel Standard.

Stand. Your information, sir, was right; I have a cross cut over my left eye that's very remarkable. But pray, sir, by what marks are you to be known?

Ban. Sir, I am dignified and distinguished by the name and title of beau Banter; I'm younger brother to sir Harry Wildair; and I hope to inherit

his estate with his humour; for his wife, I'm told, is dead, and has left no child.

Stand. Oh, sir! I'm your very humble servant; you're not unlike your brother in the face; but methinks, sir, you don't become his humour altogether so well; for what's nature in him looks like affectation in you.

Ban. Oh, Lard, sir! 'tis rather nature in me what is acquired by him; he's beholding to his education for his air. Now where d'ye think my humour was established?

Stand. Where?

Ban. At Oxford.

Stand. Fire. At Oxford!

Ban. Ay; there have I been sucking my dear *Alma Mater* these seven years: yet, in defiance to legs of mutton, small beer, crabbed books, and sour-faced doctors, I can dance a minuet, court a mistress, play at picquet, or make a paroli, with any Wildair in Christendom. In short, sir, in spite of the university, I'm a pretty gentleman.—Colonel, where's your wife?

Fire. [*Mimicking* BANTER.] In spite of the university I'm a pretty gentleman;—then, Colonel, where is your wife?—Hark ye, young Plato, whether would you have your nose slit or your ears cut?

Ban. First tell me, sir, which will you choose, to be run through the body, or shot through the head?

Fire. Follow me, and I'll tell ye.

Ban. Sir, my servants shall attend ye, if you have no equipage of your own.

Fire. Blood, sir!

Stand. Hold, brother, hold! he's a boy.

Ban. Look ye, sir, I keep half-a-dozen footmen that have no business upon earth but to answer impertinent questions; now, sir, if your fighting stomach can digest these six brawny fellows for a breakfast, their master, perhaps, may do you the favour to run you through the body for a dinner.

Fire. Sirrah, will you fight me? I received just now six months' pay, and by this light, I'll give you the half on't for one fair blow at your scull.

Ban. Down with your money, sir.

Stand. No, no, brother; if you are so free of your pay, get into the next room, there you'll find some company at cards, I suppose; you may find opportunity for your revenge; my house protects him now.

Fire. Well, sir, the time will come. [*Exit.*

Ban. Well said, brazen-head!

Stand. I hope, sir, you'll excuse the freedom of this gentleman; his education has been among the boisterous elements, the wind and waves.

Ban. Sir, I value neither him, nor his wind and waves neither; I'm privileged to be very impertinent, being an Oxonian, and obliged to fight no man, being a beau.

Stand. I admire the freedom of your condition.—But, pray, sir, have you seen your brother since he came last over?

Ban. I han't seen my brother these seven years, and scarcely heard from him but by report of others. About a month ago he was pleased to honour me with a letter from Paris, importing his design of being in London very soon, with a desire of meeting me here. Upon this, I changed my cap and gown for a long wig and sword, and came up to London to attend him, went to his house, but that was all in sables for the death of his wife; there I was told, that he designed to change his habitation, because he would avoid all remembrances that might disturb his quiet. You are the first person that has told me of his arrival, and I expect that you may likewise inform me where to wait on him.

Stand. And I suppose, sir, this was the business that occasioned me the honour of this visit?

Ban. Partly this, and partly an affair of greater consequence. You must know, sir, that though I have read ten thousand lies in the university, yet I have learned to speak the truth myself; and to deal plainly with you, the honour of this visit, as you were pleased to term it, was designed to the lady Lurewell.

Stand. My wife, sir!

Ban. My lady Lurewell, I say, sir.

Stand. But I say my wife, sir.—What!—

Ban. Why, look ye, sir; you may have the honour of being called the lady Lurewell's husband; but you will never find in any author, either ancient or modern, that she's called Mr. Standard's wife. 'Tis true, you're a handsome young fellow: she liked you, she married you; and though the priest made you both one flesh, yet there's no small distinction in your blood. You are still a disbanded colonel, and she is still a woman of quality, I take it.

Stand. And you are the most impudent young fellow I ever met with in all my life, I take it.

Ban. Sir, I'm a master of arts, and I plead the privilege of my standing.

Enter Footman, *and whispers* BANTER.

Foot. Sir, the gentleman in the coach below says, he'll be gone unless you come presently. [*Exit.*

Ban. I had forgot.—Colonel, your humble servant.

Stand. Sir, you must excuse me for not waiting on you downstairs.—[*Exit* BANTER.] An impudent young dog. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Another Room in the same.*

Enter Lady LUREWELL, Ladies, Marquis, *and* Captain FIREBALL, *as losing gamesters, one after another, tearing their cards, and flinging them about the room.* PARLY *and several* Footmen *attending.*

Lady Lure. Ruined! undone! destroyed!

1 *Lady.* O Fortune! Fortune! Fortune!

2 *Lady.* What will my husband say?

Marq. Oh malheur! malheur! malheur!

Fire. Blood and fire, I have lost six months' pay!

Marq. A hundred and ten pistoles, sink me!

Fire. Sink you! sink me, that have lost two hundred and ten pistoles.—Sink you, indeed!

Lady Lure. But why would you hazard the bank upon one card?

Marq. Because me had lose by de card tree times before.—Look, dere madame, de very next card had been our. Oh morbleu! que ça?

Lady Lure. I relied altogether on your setting the cards; you used to taillé with success.

Marq. Morbleu, madame! me nevre lose before: but that monsieur sir Arry, dat chevalier Wildair is de devil.—Vere is de chevalier?

Lady Lure. Counting our money within yonder.

Go, go, begone! and bethink yourself of some revenge.—[*Exit* Marquis.] Here he comes.

Enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR.

Sir Har. Fifteen hundred and seventy louis-d'ors!—Tall dall de rall.—[*Sings.*] Look ye, gentlemen, anybody may dance to this tune;—tall dall de rall. I dance to the tune of fifteen hundred pound, the most elevated piece of music that ever I heard in my life; they are the prettiest castanets in the world.—[*Chinks the money.*] Here, waiters, there's cards and candles for you.—[*Gives the* Footmen *money.*] Mrs. Parly,—here's hoods and scarfs for you. [*Gives her money.—Exeunt* PARLY *and* Footmen.] And here's fine coaches, splendid equipage, lovely women, and victorious burgundy for me.—Oh, ye charming angels! the loser's sorrow and the gainer's joy: get ye into my pocket.—Now, gentlemen and ladies, I am your humble servant.—You'll excuse me, I hope; the small devotion here that I pay to my good fortune.—How now! mute!—Why, ladies, I know that losers have leave to speak; but I don't find that they're privileged to be dumb.—Monsieur! ladies! captain! [*Claps* Captain FIREBALL *on the shoulder.*

Fire. Death and hell! why d'ye strike me, sir? [*Drawing.*

Sir Har. To comfort you, sir.—Your ear, captain.—The king of Spain is dead.

Fire. The king of Spain dead!

Sir Har. Dead as Julius Cæsar; I had a letter on't just now.

Fire. Tall dall de rall!—[*Sings.*] Look ye, sir, pray strike me again if you please.—See here, sir, you have left me but one solitary guinea in the world.—[*Puts it in his mouth.*] Down it goes i'faith!—Allons for the Thatched House and the Mediterranean!—Tall dall de rall! [*Exit singing.*

Sir Har. Ha! ha! ha!—Bravely resolved, captain!

Lady Lure. Bless me, sir Harry! I was afraid of a quarrel. I'm so much concerned—

Sir Har. At the loss of your money madam. But why, why should the fair be afflicted?
Your eyes, your eyes, ladies,
Much brighter than the sun, have equal power with him,
And can transform to gold whate'er they please.
The lawyer's tongue, the soldier's sword,
The courtier's flattery, and the merchant's trade,
Are slaves that dig the golden mines for you.
Your eyes untie the miser's knotted purse. [*To one* Lady.
Melt into coin the magistrate's massy chain.
Youth mints for you hereditary lands. [*To another* Lady.
And gamesters only win when they can lose to you. [*To* Lady LURFWELL.
—This luck is the most rhetorical thing in nature!

Lady Lure. I have a great mind to forswear cards as long as I live.

1 *Lady.* And I. [*Exit.*

2 *Lady.* And I. [*Exit crying.*

Sir Har. What, forswear cards! why, madam, you'll ruin our trade.—I'll maintain, that the money at court circulates more by the basset-bank, than the wealth of the merchants by the bank of the city.
Cards! the great ministers of Fortune's power;
That blindly shuffle out her thoughtless favours,
And make a knave more powerful than a king.
What adoration do these powers receive [*Lifting up a card.*
From the bright hands and fingers of the fair,
Always lift up to pay devotion here!
And then the pleasing fears, the anxious hopes,
And dubious joy that entertain our mind!—
The capot at picquet, the paroli at basset;—and then ombre! who can resist the charms of matadores?

Lady Lure. Ay, sir Harry; and then the *Sept le va! Quinze le va!* and *Trente le va!*

Sir Har. Right, right, madam!

Lady Lure. Then the nine of diamonds at comet, three fives at cribbage, and pam in lanteraloo, sir Harry!

Sir Har. Ay, madam, these are charms indeed. Then the pleasure of picking your husband's pocket overnight to play at basset next day! Then the advantage a fine gentleman may make of a lady's necessity, by gaining a favour for fifty pistoles, which a hundred years' courtship could never have produced.

Lady Lure. Nay nay, sir Harry, that's foul play.

Sir Har. Nay, nay, madam, 'tis nothing but the game; and I have played it so in France a hundred times.

Lady Lure. Come, come, sir, no more on't. I'll tell you in three words, that rather than forego my cards, I'll forswear my visits, fashions, my monkey, friends, and relations.

Sir Har. There spoke the spirit of true-born English quality, with a true French education!

Lady Lure. Look ye, sir Harry, I am well-born, and I was well bred; I brought my husband a large fortune; he shall mortgage, or I will elope.

Sir Har. No, no, madam! there's no occasion for that. See here, madam!

Lady Lure. What, the singing-birds, sir Harry! Let me see.

Sir Har. Pugh, madam, these are but a few!—But I could wish, *de tout mon cœur pour quelque commodité*, where I might be handsomely plundered of 'em.

Lady Lure. *Ah, chevalier, toujours obligeant, engageant, et tout ça!*

Sir Har. *Allons, allons, madame! tout à votre service.* [*Pulls her.*

Lady Lure. No, no, sir Harry, not at this time o' day; you shall hear from me in the evening.

Sir Har. Then, madam, I'll leave you something to entertain you the while. 'Tis a French pocket-book, with some remarks of my own upon the new way of making love. Please to peruse it, and give me your opinion in the evening. [*Exit.*

Lady Lure. [*Opening the book.*] A French pocket-book, with remarks upon the new way of making love! Then sir Harry is turning author, I find.—What's here?—Hi! hi! hi! a bank-bill for a hundred pound.—The new way of making love!—*Pardie, c'est fort galant!*—One of the prettiest remarks that ever I saw in all my life! Well now, that Wildair's a charming fellow.—Hi! hi! hi!—He has such an air, and such a turn in what he does! I warrant now, there's a hundred home-bred blockheads would come—Madam, I'll give you a hundred guineas if you'll let me—Faugh! hang their nauseous immodest proceedings!—Here's a hundred pound now, and he never names the thing: I love an impudent action with an air of modesty with all my heart. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Colonel STANDARD's *House.*

Lady LUREWELL *and* Marquis.

Lady Lure. Well, monsieur, and have you thought how to retaliate your ill fortune?

Marq. Madame, I have tought dat Fortune be one blind bitch. Why should Fortune be kinder to de Anglis chevalier dan to de France marquis? Ave I not de bon grace? Ave I not de personage? Ave I not de understanding? Can de Anglis chevalier dance bettre dan I? Can de Anglis chevalier fence bettre dan I? Can de Anglis chevalier play basset bettre dan I? Den why should Fortune be kinder to de Anglis chevalier dan de France marquis?

Lady Lure. Why? because Fortune is blind.

Marq. Blind! yes begar, and dumb and deaf too.—Vell den, Fortune give de Anglisman de riches, but nature give de Franceman de politique to correct de unequal distribution.

Lady Lure. But how can you correct it, monsieur?

Marq. Ecoute, madame. Sir Arry Wildair his vife is dead.

Lady Lure. And what advantage can you make of that?

Marq. Begar, madame—hi! hi! hi!—de Anglisman's dead vife sall cuckol her husband.

Lady Lure. How, how, sir, a dead woman cuckold her husband!

Marq. Mark, madame. We Francemen make a de distinction between de design and de term of de treaty.—She canno touch his head, but she can cuckol his pocket of ten tousan livres.

Lady Lure. Pray explain yourself, sir.

Marq. I have sir Arry Wildair his vife in my pocket.

Lady Lure. How, sir Harry's wife in your pocket!

Marq. Hold, madame; dere is an autre distinction between de design and de term of de treaty.

Lady Lure. Pray, sir, no more of your distinctions, but speak plain.

Marq. Wen de Franceman's politique is in his head, dere is noting but distinction upon his tongue. —See here, madame! I ave de picture of sir Arry's vife in my pocket.

Lady Lure. Is't possible?

Marq. Voyez!

Lady Lure. The very same, and finely drawn. Pray, monsieur, how did you purchase it?

Marq. As me did purchase de picture, so me did gain de substance, de dear, dear substance, by de bon mien, de France air, chantant, charmant de politique à la tête, and dançant à la pied.

Lady Lure. Lard bless me! how cunningly some women can play the rogue! Ah! have I found it out! Now, as I hope for mercy, I'm glad on't. I hate to have any woman more virtuous than myself.—Here was such a work with my lady Wildair's piety! my lady Wildair's conduct! and my lady Wildair's fidelity, forsooth!—Now, dear monsieur, you have infallibly told me the best news that I ever heard in my life. Well, and she was but one of us! eh?

Marq. Oh, madam! me no tell tale, me no scandalise de dead; de picture be dumb, de picture say noting.

Lady Lure. Come, come, sir, no more distinctions; I'm sure it was so. I would have given the world for such a story of her while she was living. She was charitable, forsooth! and she was devout, forsooth; and everybody was twitted i' th' teeth with my lady Wildair's reputation: And why don't you mark her behaviour, and her discretion? She goes to church twice a-day.—Ah! I hate these congregation-women. There's such a fuss and such a clutter about their devotion, that it makes more noise than all the bells in the parish.—Well, but what advantage can you make now of the picture?

Marq. De advantage of ten tousand livres, pardie!—Attendez vouz, madame. Dis lady she die at Montpelier in France: I have de broder in dat city dat write me one account dat she die in dat city, and dat she send me dis picture as a legacy, wid a tousand baise-mains to de dear marquis, de charmant marquis, mon cœur le marquis.

Lady Lure. Ay, here was devotion! here was discretion! here was fidelity! Mon cœur le marquis! ha! ha! ha! Well, but how will this procure the money?

Marq. Now, madam, for de France politique.

Lady Lure. Ay, what is the French politic?

Marq. Never to tell a secret to a voman.—Madame, je suis votre serviteur. [*Runs off.*

Lady Lure. Hold, hold, sir; we shan't part so; I will have it. [*Follows.*

Enter Colonel STANDARD *and* Captain FIREBALL.

Fire. Ha! Look! look! Look ye there, brother! See how they coquette it! Oh! there's a look! there's a simper! there's a squeeze for you! Ay, now the marquis is at it. *Mon cœur, ma foi, pardie, allons!*—Don't you see how the French rogue has the head, and the feet, and the hands, and the tongue, all going together?

Stand. [*Walking in disorder.*] Where's my reason? where's my philosophy? where's my religion now?

Fire. I'll tell you where they are, in your forehead, sir.—Blood! I say, revenge!

Stand. But how, dear brother?

Fire. Why, stab him, stab him now.—Italian, Spaniard, I say.

Stand. Stab him! why, cuckoldom's a hydra that bears a thousand heads; and though I should cut this one off, the monster still would sprout. Must I murder all the fops in the nation? and to save my head from horns, expose my neck to the halter?

Fire. 'Sdeath, sir, can't you kick and cuff?—Kick one.

Stand. Cane another.

Fire. Cut off the ears of a third.

Stand. Slit the nose of a fourth.

Fire. Tear cravats.

Stand. Burn perukes.

Fire. Shoot their coach-horses.

Stand. A noble plot!—But now it's laid, how shall we put it in execution? for not one of these fellows stirs about without his *garde-du-corps.* Then they're stout as heroes; for I can assure you, that a beau with six footmen shall fight you any gentleman in Christendom.

Enter Footman.

Foot. Sir, here's Mr. Clincher below, who begs the honour to kiss your hand.

Stand. Ay, why here's another beau.

Fire. Let him come, let him come; I'll show you how to manage a beau presently.

Stand. Hold, hold, sir; this is a simple inoffensive fellow, that will rather make us diversion.

Fire. Diversion! ay. Why, I'll knock him down for diversion.

Stand. No, no; prithee be quiet; I gave him a surfeit of intriguing some months ago before I was married.—Here, bid him come up.—[*Exit* Footman.] He's worth your acquaintance, brother.

Fire. My acquaintance! what is he?

Stand. A fellow of a strange weathercock-head, very hard, but as light as the wind; constantly full of the times, and never fails to pick up some humour or other out of the public revolutions, that proves diverting enough. Some time ago he had got the travelling maggot in his head, and was going to the Jubilee upon all occasions: but lately since the new revolution in Europe, another spirit has possessed him, and he runs stark mad after news and politics.

Enter Clincher.

Clinch. News, news, colonel, great!—Eh! what's this fellow? Methinks he has a kind of suspicious air.—Your ear, colonel.—The pope's dead.

Stand. Where did you hear it?

Clinch. I read it in the public news. [*Whispering.*

Stand. Ha! ha! ha!—And why d'ye whisper it for a secret?

Clinch. Odso! faith, that's true.—But that fellow there, what is he?

Stand. My brother Fireball, just come home from the Baltic.

Clinch. Odso!—Noble captain, I'm your most humble and obedient servant, from the poop to the forecastle.—Nay, a kiss o' t'other side, pray.—Now, dear captain, tell us the news.—Odso! I'm so pleased I have met you! Well, the news, dear captain.—You sailed a brave squadron of men-of-war to the Baltic.—Well, and what then? eh?

Fire. Why, then—we came back again.

Clinch. Did you, faith?—Foolish! foolish! very foolish!—a right sea-captain.—But, what did you do! how did you fight? what storms did you meet? and what whales did you see?

Fire. We had a violent storm off the coast of Jutland.

Clinch. Jutland! Ay, that's part of Portugal. —Well, and so;—you entered the Sound;—and you mauled Copenhagen, faith.—And then that pretty, dear, sweet, pretty king of Sweden! what sort of man is he, pray?

Fire. Why, tall and slender.

Clinch. Tall and slender! Much about my pitch? eh!

Fire. Not so gross, nor altogether so low.

Clinch. No! I'm sorry for't; very sorry indeed!

Enter Parly *to the door;* Clincher *beckons her with his hands behind going backwards, and speaking to her and the gentlemen by turns.*

Well, and what more? And so you bombarded Copenhagen.—Mrs. Parly!—Whiz! slap went the bombs.—Mrs. Parly!—And so, well, not altogether so gross, you say?—Here's a letter, you jade! —Very tall, you say? is the king very tall?—Here's a guinea, you jade!—[Parly *takes the letter, and exit;* Colonel Standard *observes him.*] Hem! hem! colonel, I'm mightily troubled with the phthisic of late.—Hem! hem! a strange stoppage of my breast here: hem! but now it is off again. —Well, but, captain, you tell us no news at all.

Fire. I tell you one piece that all the world knows, and still you are a stranger to it.

Clinch. Bless me! what can this be?

Fire. That you are a fool.

Clinch. Eh! witty, witty sea-captain. Odso! and I wonder, captain, that your understanding did not split your ship to pieces.

Fire. Why so, sir?

Clinch. Because, sir, it is so very shallow, very shallow. There's wit for you, sir—

Re-enter Parly, *and gives* Colonel Standard *a letter.*

Odso! a letter! then, there's news.—What, is it the foreign post?—What news, dear colonel, what news?—Hark ye, Mrs. Parly.

[*Talks with* Parly *while* Colonel Standard *reads the letter.*

Stand. The son of a whore! is it he? [*Reads.*

Dear Madam,

I was afraid to break open the seal of your letter, lest I should violate the work of your fair hands.—Oh, fulsome fop!—*I, therefore, with the warmth of my kisses thawed it asunder.*—Ay, here's such a turn of style as takes a fine lady!—*I have no news but that the pope's dead, and I have some packets upon that affair to send to my correspondent in Wales; but I shall waive all business, and hasten to wait on you at the hour appointed, with the wings of a Flying Post. Yours,*

Toby Clincher.

Very well, Mr. Toby.—Hark ye, brother, this fellow's a rogue.

Fire. A damned rogue!

Stand. See here! a letter to my wife!

Fire. 'Sdeath! let me tear him to pieces.

Stand. No, no; we'll manage him to more advantage. Take him with you to Locket's, and invent some way or other to fuddle him.—Here, Mr. Clincher, I have prevailed on my brother here to give you a very particular account of the whole voyage to the Sound by his own journal, if you please to honour him with your company at Locket's.

Clinch. His own journal! Odso, let me see it.

Stand. Show it him.

Fire. Here, sir.

Clinch. Now for news.—[Reads.] *Thursday, August the* 17*th, from the* 6*th noon to this day noon, winds variable, courses per traverse, true course protracted, with all impediments allowed, is north* 45 *degrees, west* 60 *miles, difference of latitude* 42 *miles, departure west* 40 *miles, latitude per judgment* 54 *degrees* 13 *minutes meridian distance current from the bearing of the land, and the latitude is* 88 *miles.*—Odso! great news, faith. —Let me see—*At noon broke our maintopsail-*

yard, being rotten in the slings; two whales southward.—Odso! a whale! great news, faith.—Come, come along, captain.—But d'ye hear? With this proviso, gentlemen, that I won't drink; for, hark ye, captain, between you and I, there's a fine lady in the wind, and I shall have the longitude and latitude of a fine lady, and the—

Fire. A fine lady! ah the rogue! [*Aside.*

Clinch. Yes, a fine lady, colonel, a very fine lady.—Come, no ceremony, good captain.

[*Exit with* Captain FIREBALL.

Stand. Well, Mrs. Parly, how go the rest of our affairs?

Par. Why, worse and worse, sir; here's more mischief still, more branches a sprouting.

Stand. Of whose planting, pray?

Par. Why, that impudent young rogue, sir Harry Wildair's brother, has commenced his suit, and fee'd counsel already.—Look here, sir, two pieces, for which, by article, I am to receive four.

Stand. [*Aside.*] 'Tis a hard case now, that a man must give four guineas for the good news of his dishonour! Some men throw away their money in debauching other men's wives, and I lay out mine to keep my own honest:—but this is making a man's fortune!—[*Aloud.*] Well, child, there's your pay; and I expect, when I come back, a true account how the business goes on.

Par. But suppose the business be done before you come back?

Stand. No, no; she han't seen him yet; and her pride will preserve her against the first assaults. Besides I shan't stay. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Another Room in the same.*

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR *and* LADY LUREWELL.

Lady Lure. Well now, sir Harry, this book you gave me! As I hope to breathe, I think 'tis the best penned piece I have seen a great while; I don't know any of our authors have writ in so florid and genteel a style.

Sir Har. Upon the subject, madam, I dare affirm there is nothing extant more moving.—Look ye, madam, I am an author rich in expressions;
The needy poets of the age may fill
Their works with rhapsodies of flames and darts,
Their barren sighs and tears, their speaking looks
And amorous vows, that might in Chaucer's time,
Perhaps, have pass'd for love; but now
'Tis only such as I can touch that noble passion,
And by the true, persuasive eloquence,
Turn'd in the moving style of louis-d'ors,
Can raise the ravish'd female to a rapture.
In short, madam, I'll match Cowley in softness, o'ertop Milton in sublime, banter Cicero in eloquence, and Dr. Swan in quibbling, by the help of that most ingenious society, called the Bank of England.

Lady Lure. Ay, sir Harry, I begin to hate that old thing called love; they say 'tis clear out in France.

Sir Har. Clear out, clear out! nobody wears it: and here, too, honesty went out with the slashed doublets, and love with the close-bodied gowns. Love! 'tis so obsolete, so mean, and out of fashion, that I can compare it to nothing but the miserable picture of Patient Grizzle at the head of an old ballad.—Faugh!

Lady Lure. Ha! ha! ha! the best emblem in the world.—Come, sir Harry, faith we'll run it down.—Love! ay, methinks I see the mournful Melpomene with her handkerchief at her eye, her heart full of fire, her eyes full of water, her head full of madness, and her mouth full of nonsense.—Oh, hang it!

Sir Har. Ay, madam. Then the doleful ditties, piteous plaints, the daggers, the poisons!—

Lady Lure. Oh, the vapours!

Sir Har. Then a man must kneel, and a man must swear.—[*Aside.*] There is a repose, I see, in the next room.

Lady Lure. Unnatural stuff!

Sir Har. Oh, madam, the most unnatural thing in the world; as fulsome as a sack-posset;—[*Pulling her towards the door*] ungenteel as a wedding-ring, and as impudent as the naked statue was in the Park. [*Pulls her again.*

Lady Lure. Ay, sir Harry; I hate love that's impudent. These poets dress it up so in their tragedies, that no modest woman can bear it. Your way is much the more tolerable, I must confess.

Sir Har. Ay, ay, madam; I hate your rude whining and sighing; it puts a lady out of countenance. [*Pulling her.*

Lady Lure. Truly so it does.—Hang their impudence!—But where are we going?

Sir Har. Only to rail at love, madam.

[*Pulls her in.*

Enter BANTER.

Ban. Hey! who's here?

Re-enter LADY LUREWELL.

Lady Lure. Psha, prevented! By a stranger too! Had it been my husband now.—Psha!—Very familiar, sir.

Ban. Madam, you have dropped your hat.

[*Takes up* SIR HARRY'S *hat, that was dropped in the room.*]

Lady Lure. Discovered, too, by a stranger!—What shall I do?

Sir Har. [*Within.*] Madam, you have got the most confounded pens here! Can't you get the colonel to write the superscriptions of your letters for you?

Lady Lure. Lord bless me, sir Harry! don't you know that the colonel can't write French? Your time is so precious!

Sir Har. Shall I direct by way of Rouen or Paris?

Lady Lure. Which you will.

Ban. Madam, I very much applaud your choice of a secretary; he understands the intrigues of most courts in Europe they say.

Re-enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR, *with a letter.*

Sir Har. Here, madam, I presume 'tis right.—This gentleman a relation of yours, madam?—Dem him! [*Aside.*

Ban. Brother, your humble servant.

Sir Har. Brother! by what relation, sir?

Ban. Begotten by the same father, born of the same mother, brother kindred, and brother beau.

Sir Har. Heyday! how the fellow strings his genealogy!—Look ye, sir, you may be brother to Tom Thumb for aught I know; but if you are my brother, I could have wished you in your mother's womb for an hour or two longer.

Ban. Sir, I received your letter at Oxford, with

your commands to meet you in London; and if you can remember your own hand, there 'tis. [*Gives a letter.*

Sir Har. [*Looking over the letter.*] Oh! pray, sir, let me consider you a little.—By Jupiter a pretty boy, a very pretty boy! a handsome face, good shape,—[*Walks about and views him,*] well dressed.—The rogue has a good leg too!—Come kiss me, child.—Ay, he kisses like one of the family, the right velvet lip.—Canst thou dance, child?

Ban. Oui, monsieur.

Lady Lure. Heyday! French too! why sure, sir, you could never be bred at Oxford!

Ban. No, madam, my clothes were made in London.—Brother, I have some affairs of consequence to communicate, which require a little privacy.

Lady Lure. Oh, sir, I beg your pardon, I'll leave you.—Sir Harry, you'll stay supper?

Sir Har. Assurément, madame.

Ban. Yes, madam, we'll both stay. [*Exit* Lady Lurewell.

Sir Har. Both!—Sir, I'll send you back to your mutton commons again. How now?

Ban. No, no; I shall find better mutton commons by messing with you, brother.—Come, sir Harry; if you stay, I stay; if you go, allons!

Sir Har. Why, the devil's in this young fellow! Why sirrah, hast thou any thoughts of being my heir? Why, you dog, you ought to pimp for me; you should keep a pack of wenches o' purpose to hunt down matrimony. Don't you know, sir, that lawful wedlock in me is certain poverty to you? Look ye, sirrah, come along: and for my disappointment just now, if you don't get me a new mistress to night, I'll marry to-morrow, and won't leave you a groat.—Go, pimp, like a dutiful brother! [*Pushes him out, and exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Tavern.*

Enter Captain Fireball, *hauling in* Clincher.

Fire. Come, sir, not drink the king's health!

Clinch. Pray now, good captain, excuse me. Look here, sir;—[*Pulling out his watch.*] the critical minute, the critical minute, faith!

Fire. What d'ye mean, sir?

Clinch. The lady's critical minute, sir.—Sir, your humble servant. [*Going.*

Fire. Well, the death of this Spanish king will—

Clinch. [*Returning.*] Eh! what's that of the Spanish king? Tell me, dear captain, tell me.

Fire. Sir, if you please to sit down, I'll tell you that old Don Carlos is dead.

Clinch. Dead!—nay, then—[*Sits down.*] Here, pen and ink, boy; pen and ink presently; I must write to my correspondent in Wales straight.—Dead!— [*Rises, and walks about in disorder.*

Fire. What's the matter, sir?

Clinch. Politics, politics, stark mad with politics.

Fire. 'Sdeath, sir, what have such fools as you to do with politics?

Clinch. What, sir? the Succession!—Not mind the Succession!

Fire. Nay, that's minded already; 'tis settled upon a prince of France.

Clinch. What, settled already!—the best news that ever came into England!—Come, captain, faith and troth, captain, here's a health to the Succession.

Fire. Burn the Succession, sir! I won't drink it. What, drink confusion to our trade, religion, and liberties!

Clinch. Ay, by all means. As for trade, d'ye see? I'm a gentleman, and hate it mortally. These tradesmen are the most impudent fellows we have, and spoil all our good manners. What have we to do with trade?

Fire. A trim politician, truly! And what do you think of our religion, pray?

Clinch. Hi! hi! hi!—religion! And what has a gentleman to do with religion, pray? And to hear a sea-captain talk of religion!—that's pleasant, faith!

Fire. And have you no regard to our liberties, sir?

Clinch. Psha! liberties! that's a jest. We beaux shall have liberty to whore and drink in any government, and that's all we care for.—

Enter Colonel Standard.

Dear colonel, the rarest news!

Stand. Damn your news, sir! why are not you drunk by this?

Clinch. A very civil question, truly!

Stand. Here, boy, bring in the brandy.—Fill!

Clinch. This is a piece of politics that I don't so well comprehend.

Stand. Here, sir; now drink it off, or—[*Draws*] expect your throat cut!

Clinch. Ay, ay, this comes o'the Succession; fire and sword already!

Stand. Come, sir, off with it!

Clinch. Pray, colonel, what have I done to be burned alive?

Stand. Drink, sir, I say!—[*Aside to* Captain Fireball.] Brother, manage him; I must be gone. [*Exit.*

Fire. Ay, drink, sir!

Clinch. Eh! what the devil, attacked both by sea and land!—Look ye, gentlemen, if I must be poisoned, pray let me choose my own dose. Were I a lord now, I should have the privilege of the block; and as I'm a gentleman, pray stifle me with claret at least; don't let me die like a bawd, with brandy.

Fire. Brandy! you dog, abuse brandy! flat treason against the navy-royal!—Sirrah, I'll teach you to abuse the fleet!—Here, Shark! [*Calls.*

Enter Shark.

Get three or four of the ship's crew, and press this fellow aboard the Beelzebub.

Shark. Ay, master. [*Exit.*

Clinch. What! aboard the Beelzebub! Nay, nay, dear captain, I'll choose to go to the devil this way.—Here, sir, your good health—and my own confusion, I'm afraid!—[*Drinks it off.*] Oh, fire! fire! flames! brimstone! and tobacco!

[*Beats his stomach.*

Fire. Here, quench it, quench it then. Take the glass, sir.

Clinch. What, another broadside! nay, then I'm sunk downright! Dear captain, give me quarter; consider the present juncture of affairs; you'll spoil my head, ruin my politics—faith, you will!

Fire. Here, Shark! [*Calls.*

Clinch. Well, well, I will drink!—The devil take Shark for me!—[*Drinks.*] Whiz! buz! don't you hear it? put your ear to my breast, and hear how it whizzes like a hot iron!—Eh! bless me, how the ship rolls!—I can't stand upon my legs, faith!—Dear captain, give me a kiss.—Ay, burn the Succession!—Look ye, captain, I shall be sea-sick presently! [*Falls into* Captain FIREBALL'S *arms.*

Re-enter SHARK *and* Sailor *with a chair.*

Fire. Here, in with him!

Shark. Ay, ay, sir!—Avast, avast!—[*They put* CLINCHER *into the chair.*] Here, boy.—No Nantes left? [*Topes the glass.*

Fire. Bring him along.

Clinch. Politics! politics! brandy politics!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Colonel STANDARD'S *House.*

Enter Lady LUREWELL *and* PARLY.

Lady Lure. Did you ever see such an impudent young rogue as that Banter? He followed his brother up and down from place to place so very close that we could not so much as whisper.

Par. I reckon, sir Harry will dispose of him now, madam, where he may be secured. But I wonder, madam, why Clincher comes not according to his letter! 'tis near the hour.

Lady Lure. I wish, Parly, that no harm may befal me to-day; for I had a most frightful dream last night; I dreamt of a mouse!

Par. 'Tis strange, madam, you should be so much afraid of that little creature, that can do you no harm!

Lady Lure. Look ye, girl, we women of quality have each of us some darling fright. I, now, hate a mouse; my lady Lovecards abhors a cat; Mrs. Fiddlefan can't bear a squirrel; the countess of Picquet abominates a frog; and my lady Swimair hates a man!

Enter Marquis, *running.*

Marq. Madame! madame! madame! pardie, voyez!—L'argent! l'argent! [*Shows a bag of money.*

Lady Lure. As I hope to breathe, he has got it!—Well, but how? how, dear monsieur?

Marq. Ah, madame! begar, monsieur sir Arry be one pigeaneau.—Voyez, madame; me did tell him dat my broder in Montpelier did furnise his lady wid ten tousan livres for de expence of her travaille; and dat she not being able to write wen she was dying, did give him de picture for de certificate and de credential to receive de money from her husband. Mark ye!

Lady Lure. The best plot in the world!—You told him, that your brother lent her the money in France, when her bills, I suppose were delayed.—You put in that, I presume.

Marq. Oui, oui, madame.

Lady Lure. And that upon her death-bed she gave your brother the picture, as a certificate to sir Harry that she had received the money, which picture your brother sent over to you, with commission to receive the debt?

Marq. Assurément.—Dere was the politique, de France politique!—See, madame, wat he can do, de France marquis! He did make de Anglise lady cuckle her husband when she was living, and sheat him when she was dead, begar: ha! ha! ha!—Oh! pardie, c'est bon.

Lady Lure. Ay, but what did sir Harry say?

Marq. Oh! begar monsieur chevalier he love his vife; he say, dat if she take up a hundre tousan livres, he would repay it; he knew de picture, he say, and order me de money from his stewar.—Oh Notre Dame! Monsieur sir Arry be one dupe.

Lady Lure. Well but, monsieur, I long to know one thing. Was the conquest you made of his lady so easy? What assaults did you make? and what resistance did she show?

Marq. Resistance against de France marquis! Voyez, madame; dere was tree doux-yeux, one serenade, an' two capre; dat was all, begar!

Lady Lure. Chatillionte! There's nothing in nature so sweet to a longing woman, as a malicious story.—Well, monsieur! 'tis about a thousand pounds; we go snacks.

Marq. Snacke! pardie, for what? why snacke, madame? Me will give you de present of fifty louis-d'ors; dat is ver good snacke for you.

Lady Lure. And you'll give me no more?—Very well!

Marq. Ver' well! yes, begar, 'tis ver' well!—Considre, madame, me be de poor refugié, me 'ave noting but de religious charité and de France politique, de fruit of my own address, dat is all.

Lady Lure. Ay, an object of charity, with a thousand pound in his fist! Hem!—[*Knocking below.—Exit* PARLY.] Oh monsieur! that's my husband, I know his knock.—He must not see you. Get into the closet till by and by.—[*Hurries him in.*] And if I don't be revenged upon your France politique, then have I no English politique.—Hang the money! I would not for twice a thousand pound forbear abusing this virtuous woman to her husband.

Re-enter PARLY.

Par. 'Tis sir Harry, madam.

Lady Lure. As I could wish.—Chairs.

Enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR.

Sir Har. Here, Mrs. Parly, in the first place I sacrifice a louis-d'or to thee for good luck.

Par. A guinea, sir, will do as well.

Sir Har. No, no, child; French money is always most successful in bribes, and very much in fashion, child. [*Exit* PARLY.

Enter DICKY *and runs to* Sir HARRY.

Dicky. Sir, will you please to have your own nightcaps?

Sir Har. Sirrah!

Dicky. Sir, sir! shall I order your chair to the back-door by five o'clock in the morning?

Sir Har. The devil's in the fellow! Get you gone!—[DICKY *runs out.*] Now, dear madam, I have secured my brother, you have disposed the colonel, and we may rail at love till we han't a word more to say.

Lady Lure. Ay, sir Harry.—Please to sit a little, sir.—You must know I'm in a strange humour of asking you some questions.—How did you like your lady, pray sir?

Sir Har. Like her!—ha! ha! ha!—so very well, faith, that for her very sake I'm in love with every woman I meet.

Lady Lure. And did matrimony please you extremely?

Sir Har. So very much, that if polygamy were allowed, I would have a new wife every day.

Lady Lure. Oh, sir Harry! this is raillery. But your serious thoughts upon the matter, pray.

Sir Har. Why then, madam, to give you my true sentiments of wedlock: I had a lady that I married by chance, she was virtuous by chance, and I loved her by great chance. Nature gave her beauty, education, and air, and Fortune threw a young fellow of five-and-twenty in her lap. I courted her all day, loved her all night, she was my mistress one day, my wife another: I found in one the variety of a thousand, and the very confinement of marriage gave me the pleasure of change.

Lady Lure. And she was very virtuous?

Sir Har. Look ye, madam, you know she was beautiful. She had good-nature about her mouth, the smile of beauty in her cheeks, sparkling wit in her forehead, and sprightly love in her eyes.

Lady Lure. Psha! I knew her very well; the woman was well enough. But you don't answer my question, sir.

Sir Har. So, madam, as I told you before, she was young and beautiful, I was rich and vigorous; my estate gave a lustre to my love, and a swing to our enjoyment; round, like the ring that made us one, our golden pleasures circled without end.

Lady Lure. Golden pleasures! golden fiddlesticks!—What d'ye tell me of your canting stuff? Was she virtuous, I say?

Sir Har. [*Aside.*] Ready to burst with envy; but I will torment thee a little.—[*Aloud.*] So, madam, I powdered to please her, she dressed to engage me! we toyed away the morning in amorous nonsense, lolled away the evening in the Park, or the playhouse, and all the night—hem!—

Lady Lure. Look ye, sir, answer my question, or I shall take it ill.

Sir Har. Then, madam, there was never such a pattern of unity.—Her wants were still prevented by my supplies; my own heart whispered me her desires, 'cause she herself was there; no contention ever rose, but the dear strife of who should most oblige; no noise about authority: for neither would stoop to command, 'cause both thought it glory to obey.

Lady Lure. Stuff! stuff! stuff!—I won't believe a word on't.

Sir Har. Ha! ha! ha!—Then, madam, we never felt the yoke of matrimony, because our inclinations made us one; a power superior to the forms of wedlock. The marriage-torch had lost its weaker light in the bright flame of mutual love that joined our hearts before. Then—

Lady Lure. Hold, hold, sir! I cannot bear it; sir Harry, I'm affronted.

Sir Har. Ha! ha! ha! affronted!—

Lady Lure. Yes, sir; 'tis an affront to any woman to hear another commended; and I will resent it.—In short, sir Harry, your wife was a—

Sir Har. Buz, madam!—no detraction.—I'll tell you what she was.—So much an angel in her conduct, that though I saw another in her arms, I should have thought the devil had raised the phantom, and my more conscious reason had given my eyes the lie.

Lady Lure. Very well! then I an't to be believed, it seems.—But, d'ye hear, sir?

Sir Har. Nay, madam, do you hear? I tell you, 'tis not in the power of malice to cast a blot upon her fame; and though the vanity of our sex, and the envy of yours, conspired both against her honour, I would not hear a syllable. [*Stopping his ears.*

Lady Lure. Why then, as I hope to breathe, you shall hear it.—The picture! the picture! the picture! [*Bawling aloud.*

Sir Har. Ran, tan, tan! A pistol-bullet from ear to ear.

Lady Lure. That picture which you had just now from the French marquis, for a thousand pound, that very picture did your very virtuous wife send to the marquis as a pledge of her very virtuous and dying affection. So that you are both robbed of your honour, and cheated of your money. [*Aloud.*

Sir Har. Louder, louder, madam!

Lady Lure. I tell you, sir, your wife was a jilt; I know it, I'll swear it.—She virtuous! she was a devil.

Sir Har. Fal, al, deral! [*Sings.*

Lady Lure. Was ever the like seen! He won't hear me—I burst with malice, and now he won't mind me.—Won't you hear me yet?

Sir Har. No, no, madam.

Lady Lure. Nay, then I can't bear it.—[*Bursts out a-crying.*] Sir, I must say that you're an unworthy person, to use a woman of quality at this rate, when she has her heart full of malice; I don't know but it may make me miscarry. Sir, I say again and again, that she was no better than one of us, and I know it; I have seen it with my eyes, so I have.

Sir Har. Good Heavens deliver me, I beseech thee! How shall I 'scape? [*Aside.*

Lady Lure. Will you hear me yet? Dear sir Harry, do but hear me; I'm longing to speak.

Sir Har. Oh, I have it!—Hush! hush! hush!

Lady Lure. Eh! what's the matter?

Sir Har. A mouse! a mouse! a mouse!

Lady Lure. Where? where? where?

Sir Har. Your petticoats, your petticoats, madam!—[Lady LUREWELL *shrieks and runs off.*] Oh, my head! I was never worsted by a woman before.—But I have heard so much as to know the marquis to be a villain.—[*Knocking.*] Nay then, I must run for't.—[*Runs out, and returns.*] The entry is stopped by a chair coming in; and something there is in that chair that I will discover, if I can find a place to hide myself.—[*Goes to the closet-door.*] Fast! I have keys about me for most locks about St. James's.—Let me see.—[*Tries one key.*] No, no; this opens my lady Planthorn's back-door.—[*Tries another.*] Nor this; this is

the key to my lady Stakeall's garden.—[*Tries a third.*] Ay, ay, this does it, faith.

[*Goes into the closet, and peeps out.*

Enter SHARK *and* Sailor, *with* CLINCHER *in a chair;* PARLY *following.*

Par. Hold, hold, friend! who gave you orders to lug in your dirty chair into the house?

Shark. My master, sweetheart.

Par. Who is your master, impudence?

Shark. Everybody, saucebox. — And, for the present, here's my master! and, if you have anything to say to him, there he is for ye.—[*Lugs* CLINCHER *out of the chair, and throws him upon the floor.*] Steer away, Tom. [*Exit with* Sailor.

Sir Har. What the devil, Mr. Jubilee, is it you?

Par. Bless me! the gentleman's dead! Murder! murder!

Re-enter Lady LUREWELL.

Lady Lure. Protect me! What's the matter, Clincher?

Par. Mr. Clincher, are you dead, sir?

Clinch. Yes.

Lady Lure. Oh! then, 'tis well enough.—Are you drunk, sir?

Clinch. No.

Lady Lure. Well! certainly I'm the most unfortunate woman living: all my affairs, all my designs, all my intrigues, miscarry.—Faugh! the beast—But, sir, what's the matter with you?

Clinch. Politics.

Par. Where have you been, sir?

Clinch. Shark!

Lady Lure. What shall we do with him, Parly? If the colonel should come home now, we were ruined.

Enter Colonel STANDARD.

Oh, inevitable destruction!

Sir Har. Ay, ay; unless I relieve her now, all the world can't save her.

Stand. Bless me! what's here?—Who are you, sir?

Clinch. Brandy.

Stand. See there, madam!—Behold the man that you prefer to me! And such as he are all those topgallants that daily haunt my house, ruin your honour, and disturb my quiet.—I urge not the sacred bond of marriage; I'll waive your earnest vows of truth to me, and only lay the case in equal balance; and see whose merit bears the greater weight, his or mine.

Sir Har. Well argued, colonel!

Stand. Suppose yourself freely disengaged, unmarried, and to make a choice of him you thought most worthy of your love; would you prefer a brute? a monkey? one destined only for the sport of man? —Yes; take him to your bed; there let the beast disgorge his fulsome load in your fair, lovely bosom; snore out his passion in your soft embrace; and, with the vapours of his sick debauch, perfume your sweet apartment.

Lady Lure. Ah, nauseous! nauseous! poison!

Stand. I ne'er was taught to set a value on myself: but, when compared to him, there modesty must stoop, and indignation give my words a loose, to tell you, madam, that I am a man unblemished in my honour, have nobly served my king and country; and, for a lady's service, I think that nature has not been defective.

Sir Har. Egad, I should think so too; the fellow's well made.

Stand. I'm young as he, my person too as fair to outward view; and, for my mind, I thought it could distinguish right, and therefore made a choice of you.—Your sex have blessed our isle with beauty, by distant nations prized; and could they place their loves aright, their lovers might acquire the envy of mankind, as well as they the wonder of the world.

Sir Har. Ay, now he coaxes.—He will conquer unless I relieve her in time; she begins to melt already.

Stand. Add to all this, I love you next to Heaven; and, by that Heaven I swear, the constant study of my days and nights have been to please my dearest wife. Your pleasure never met control from me, nor your desires a frown.—I never mentioned my distrust before, nor will I now wrong your discretion so as e'er to think you made him an appointment.

Lady Lure. Generous, generous man! [*Weeps.*

Sir Har. Nay, then, 'tis time for me; I will relieve her.—[*Steals out of the closet, and coming behind* Colonel STANDARD, *claps him on the shoulder.*] Colonel, your humble servant.

Stand. Sir Harry! how came you hither?

Sir Har. Ah, poor fellow! thou hast got thy load with a witness; but the wine was humming strong; I have got a touch on't myself.

[*Reels a little.*

Stand. Wine, sir Harry! what wine?

Sir Har. Why, 'twas new burgundy, heady stuff. —But the dog was soon gone, knocked under presently.

Stand. What, then Mr. Clincher was with you, it seems? eh!

Sir Har. Yes, faith, we have been together all this afternoon; 'tis a pleasant foolish fellow. He would needs give me a welcome to town, on pretence of hearing all the news from the Jubilee. The humour was new to me; so to't we went.—But 'tis a weak-headed coxcomb; two or three bumpers did his business.—[*Aside to* Lady LUREWELL.] Ah, madam, what do I deserve for this?

Lady Lure. Look ye there, sir; you see how sir Harry has cleared my innocence.—[*Aside to* Sir HARRY WILDAIR.] I'm obliged t'ye, sir; but I must leave you to make it out.

[*Exit,* PARLY *following.*

Stand. Yes, yes; he has cleared you wonderfully.—But pray, sir, I suppose you can inform me how Mr. Clincher came into my house? eh!

Sir Har. Ay; why, you must know that the fool got presently as drunk as a drum; so I had him tumbled into a chair, and ordered the fellows to carry him home. Now you must know he lodges but three doors off; but the boobies, it seems, mistook the door, and brought him in here, like a brace of loggerheads.

Stand. Oh, yes; sad loggerheads, to mistake a door in James's for a house in Covent-garden.— Here! [*Calls.*

Enter Footmen.

Take away that brute.—[Footmen *carry off* CLINCHER.] And you say 'twas new burgundy, sir Harry, very strong?

Sir Har. [*Aside.*] Egad, there is some trick in this matter, and I shall be discovered.—[*Aloud.*] Ay, colonel; but I must be gone: I'm engaged to meet—colonel, I'm your humble servant. [*Going.*

Stand. But, sir Harry, where's your hat, sir?

Sir Har. Oh, morbleu! these hats, gloves, canes, and swords, are the ruin of all our designs. [*Aside.*

Stand. But where's your hat, sir Harry?

Sir Har. [*Aside.*] I'll never intrigue again with anything about me but what is just bound to my body. How shall I come off?—[*Aloud.*] Hark ye, colonel, in your ear; I would not have your lady hear it.—You must know, just as I came into the room here, what should I spy but a great mouse running across that closet-door. I took no notice, for fear your lady should be frighted, but with all my force (d'ye see), I flung my hat at it, and so threw it into the closet, and there it lies.

Stand. And so, thinking to kill the mouse, you flung your hat into that closet?

Sir Har. Ay, ay; that was all. I'll go fetch it.

Stand. No, sir Harry, I'll bring it out. [*Goes into the closet.*

Sir Har. Now have I told a matter of twenty lies in a breath.

Stand. Sir Harry! is this the mouse that you threw your hat at?

[*Returns with the hat in one hand, and hauling in the* Marquis *with the other.*

Sir Har. I'm amazed!

Marq. Pardie, I'm amaze too.

Stand. Look ye, monsieur Marquis, as for your part, I shall cut your throat, sir.

Sir Har. Give me leave, I must cut his throat first.

Marq. Wat! bote cut my troat! Begar, messieurs, I have but one troat.

Re-enter Parly, *running.*

Par. [*To* Colonel Standard.] Sir, the monsieur is innocent; he came upon another design. My lady begins to be penitent, and if you make any noise 'twill spoil all.

Stand. Look ye, gentlemen, I have too great a confidence in the virtue of my wife, to think it in the power of you, or you, sir, to wrong my honour: but I am bound to guard her reputation, so that no attempts be made that may provoke a scandal: therefore, gentlemen, let me tell you, 'tis time to desist. [*Exit,* Parly *following.*

Sir Har. Ay, ay; so 'tis, faith.—Come, monsieur, I must talk with you, sir. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Colonel Standard's *House.*

Enter Colonel Standard *and* Captain Fireball.

Stand. In short, brother, a man may talk till doomsday of sin, hell, and damnation; but your rhetoric will never convince a lady that there's anything of a devil in a handsome fellow with a fine coat. You must show the cloven-foot, expose the brute as I have done; and though her virtue sleeps, her pride will surely take the alarm.

Fire. Ay, but if you had let me cut off one of the rogue's ears before you sent him away—

Stand. No, no; the fool has served my turn, without the scandal of a public resentment; and the effect has shown that my design was right; I've touched her very heart, and she relents apace.

Enter Lady Lurewell, *running.*

Lady Lure. Oh! my dear, save me; I'm frighted out of my life.

Fire. Blood and fire! madam, who dare touch you? [*Draws his sword and stands before her.*

Lady Lure. Oh, sir! a ghost! a ghost! I have seen it twice.

Fire. Nay then, we soldiers have nothing to do with ghosts; send for the parson. [*Sheathes his sword.*

Stand. 'Tis fancy, my dear, nothing but fancy.

Lady Lure. Oh dear, colonel! I'll never lie alone again; I'm frighted to death; I saw it twice; twice it stalked by my chamber-door, and with a hollow voice uttered a piteous groan.

Stand. This is strange! ghosts by day-light!—Come, my dear, along with me; don't shrink, we'll see to find this ghost. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Street.*

Enter Sir Harry Wildair, Marquis, *and* Dicky.

Sir Har. Dicky!

Dicky. Sir.

Sir Har. Do you remember anything of a thousand pounds lent to my wife in Montpelier by a French gentleman?

Marq. Oui, monsieur Dicky, you remembre de gentilman, he was one marquis.

Dicky. Marqui, sir! I think, for my part, that all the men in France are marqui's. We met above a thousand marqui's, but the devil a one of 'em could lend a thousand pence, much less a thousand pound!

Marq. Morbleu, que dites-vous, bougre le chien?

Sir Har. Hold, sir, pray answer me one question? What made you fly your country?

Marq. My religion, monsieur.

Sir Har. So you fled for your religion out of France; and are a downright atheist in England? A very tender conscience truly!

Marq. Begar, monsieur, my conscience be de ver' tendre; he no suffer not his mastre to starve, pardie!

Sir Har. Come, sir, no ceremony; refund.

Marq. Refunde! vat is dat refunde? Parlez Francais, monsieur.

Sir Har. No, sir; I tell you in plain English, return my money, or I'll lay you by the heels.

Marq. Oh! begar dere is the Anglisman now. Dere is de law for me. De law! Ecoute, monsieur sir Arry—voyez ça.—De France marquis scorn de law. My broder lend your vife de money, and here is my witness. [*Draws.*

Sir Har. Your evidence, sir, is very positive, and shall be examined: but this is no place to try

the cause; we'll cross the Park into the fields; you shall throw down the money between us, and the best title, upon a fair hearing, shall take it up.—Allons!

Marq. Oh! de tout mon cœur.—Allons! Fient à la tête, begar! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* Colonel STANDARD'S *House.*

Enter Lady LUREWELL *and* PARLY.

Lady Lure. Psha! I'm such a frightful fool! 'Twas nothing but a fancy.—Come, Parly, get me pen and ink, I'll divert it. Sir Harry shall know what a wife he had, I'm resolved. Though he would not hear me speak, he'll read my letter sure. [*Sits down to write.*

Ghost. [*Within.*] Hold!

Lady Lure. Protect me!—Parly, don't leave me.—But I won't mind it.

Ghost. Hold!

Lady Lure. Defend me!—Don't you hear a voice?

Par. I thought so, madam.

Lady Lure. It called hold.—I will venture once more. [*Sits down to write.*

Ghost. Disturb no more the quiet of the dead.

Lady Lure. Now, 'tis plain, I heard the words.

Par. Deliver us, madam, and forgive us our sins! what is it?

Enter Ghost; Lady LUREWELL *and* PARLY *shriek, and run to a corner of the stage.*

Ghost. Behold the airy form of wrong'd Angelica,
Forced from the shades below to vindicate her fame.
Forbear, malicious woman, thus to load
With scandalous reproach the grave of innocence.
Repent, vain woman!
Thy matrimonial vow is register'd above,
And all the breaches of that solemn faith
Are register'd below. I'm sent to warn thee to repent.
Forbear to wrong thy injured husband's bed,
Disturb no more the quiet of the dead.

[*Stalks off.*—Lady LUREWELL *swoons*, PARLY *supports her.*

Par. Help! help! help!

Enter Colonel STANDARD *and* Captain FIREBALL.

Stand. Bless us! what, fainting! What's the matter?

Fire. Breeding, breeding, sir.

Par. Oh, sir, we're frighted to death; here has been the ghost again.

Stand. Ghost! why you're mad, sure! What ghost?

Par. The ghost of Angelica, sir Harry Wildair's wife.

Stand. Angelica!

Par. Yes, sir; and here it preached to us the Lord knows what, and murdered my mistress with mere morals.

Fire. A good hearing, sir; 'twill do her good.

Stand. Take her in, Parly.—[PARLY *leads out* Lady LUREWELL.] What can this mean, brother?

Fire. The meaning's plain. There's a design of communication between your wife and sir Harry; so his wife is come to forbid the bans, that's all.

Stand. No, no, brother: if I may be induced to believe the walking of ghosts, I rather fancy that the rattle-headed fellow her husband has broke the poor lady's heart; which, together with the indignity of her burial, has made her uneasy in her grave.—But whatever be the cause, it's fit we immediately find out sir Harry, and inform him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*The Park.*

Lord BELLAMY *and others discovered walking about*, Sir HARRY WILDAIR *and* Marquis *enter and pass hastily over the stage.*

Lord Bel. Sir Harry! [*Calls.*

Sir Har. My lord!—Monsieur, I'll follow you, sir. [*Exit* Marquis.

Lord Bel. I must talk with you, sir.

Sir Har. Pray, my lord, let it be very short, for I was never in more haste in my life.

Lord Bel. May I presume, sir, to inquire the cause that detained you so late last night at my house?

Sir Har. [*Aside.*] More mischief again!—[*Aloud.*] Perhaps, my lord, I may not presume to inform you.

Lord Bel. Then perhaps, sir, I may presume to extort it from you.

Sir Har. Look ye, my lord, don't frown; it spoils your face.—But if you must know, your lady owes me two hundred guineas, and that sum I will presume to extort from your lordship.

Lord Bel. Two hundred guineas! have you anything to show for it?

Sir Har. Ha! ha! ha! Show for it, my lord! I showed quint and quatorze for it; and to a man of honour, that's as firm as a bond and judgment.

Lord Bel. Come, sir, this won't pass upon me; I'm a man of honour.

Sir Har. Honour! ha! ha! ha!—'Tis very strange that some men, though their education be never so gallant, will ne'er learn breeding!—Look ye, my lord, when you and I were under the tuition of our governors, and conversed only with old Cicero, Livy, Virgil, Plutarch, and the like; why then such a man was a villain, and such a one was a man of honour: but now, that I have known the court, a little of what they call the *beau-monde* and the *bel-esprit*, I find that honour looks as ridiculous as Roman buskins upon your lordship, or my full peruke upon Scipio Africanus.

Lord Bel. Why should you think so, sir?

Sir Har. Because the world's improved, my lord, and we find that this honour is a very troublesome and impertinent thing. Can't we live together like good neighbours and Christians, as they do in France? I lend you my coach, I borrow yours; you dine with me, I sup with you; I lie with your wife, and you lie with mine. Honour! that's such an impertinence!—Pray, my lord, hear me. What does your honour think of murdering your friend's reputation? making a jest of his misfortunes? cheating him at cards, debauching his bed, or the like?

Lord Bel. Why rank villany.

Sir Har. Pish! pish! nothing but good manners, excess of good manners. Why, you han't been at court lately. There 'tis the only practice to show our wit and breeding.—As for instance,

your friend reflects upon you when absent, because 'tis good manners; rallies you when present, because 'tis witty; cheats you at piquet, to show he has been in France; and lies with your wife, to show he's a man of quality.

Lord Bel. Very well, sir.

Sir Har. In short, my lord, you have a wrong notion of things. Should a man with a handsome wife revenge all affronts done to his honour, poor White, Chaves, Morris, Locket, Pawlet, and Pontack, were utterly ruined.

Lord Bel. How, so, sir?

Sir Har. Because, my lord, you must run all their customers quite through the body. Were it not for abusing your men of honour, taverns and chocolate-houses could not subsist; and were there but a round tax laid upon scandal, and false politics, we men of figure would find it much heavier than four shillings in the pound.—Come, come, my lord; no more on't, for shame; your honour is safe enough, for I have the key of its back-door in my pocket. [*Runs off.*

Lord Bel. Sir, I shall meet you another time. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.—*The Fields.*

Enter Marquis *with a* Footman *carrying his fighting equipage, pumps, caps, &c. He dresses himself accordingly, and flourishes about the stage.*

Marq. Sa! sa! sa! fient à la tête!—Sa—embaracade;—quart sur redouble! Hey!

Enter Sir Harry Wildair.

Sir Har. Ha! ha! ha! the devil! must I fight with a tumbler? These French are as great fops in their quarrels as in their amours.

Marq. Allons! allons! Stripe, stripe.

Sir Har. No, no, sir; I never strip to engage a man; I fight as I dance.—Come, sir, down with the money.

Marq. Dere it is, pardie!—[*Lays down the bag between them.*] Allons!—

Enter Dicky, *and gives* Sir Harry *a gun.*

Morbleu! que ça?

Sir Har. Now, Monsieur, if you offer to stir, I'll shoot you through the head.—Dicky, take up the money, and carry it home.

Dick. [*Aside.*] Here it is, faith: and if my master be killed, the money's my own.

[*Takes up the bag, and exit with* Footman.

Marq. Oh morbleu! de Anglisman be one coward.

Sir Har. Ha! ha! ha! Where's your France politique now? Come, Monsieur; you must know I scorn to fight any man for my own; but now we're upon the level; and since you have been at the trouble of putting on your habiliments, I must requite your pains. So come on, sir.

[*Lays down the gun, and uses his sword.*

Marq. Come on! for wat? wen de money is gone! de Franceman fight where dere is no profit! Pardonnez-moi, pardie! [*Sits down to pull off his pumps.*

Sir Har. Hold, hold, sir; you must fight. Tell me how you came by this picture?

Marq. [*Starting up.*] Wy den, begar, monsieur chevalier, since de money be gone, me will speak de vérité.—Pardie, monsieur, me did make de cuckle of you, and your vife send me de picture for my pain.

Sir Har. Look ye, sir, if I thought you had merit enough to gain a lady's heart from me, I would shake hands immediately, and be friends: but as I believe you to be a vain scandalous liar, I'll cut your throat. [*They fight.*

Enter Colonel Standard *and* Captain Fireball, *who part them.*

Stand. Hold, hold, gentlemen!—Brother, secure the marquis.—Come, sir Harry, put up; I have something to say to you very serious.

Sir Har. Say it quickly then; for I'm a little out of humour, and want something to make me laugh.

[*As they talk* Marquis *dresses, and* Captain Fireball *helps him.*

Stand. Will what's very serious make you laugh?

Sir Har. Most of all.

Stand. Psha! Pray, sir Harry, tell me what made you leave your wife?

Sir Har. Ha! ha! ha! I knew it.—Pray, colonel, what makes you stay with your wife?

Stand. Nay, but pray answer me directly; I beg it as a favour.

Sir Har. Why then, colonel, you must know we were a pair of the most happy, toying, foolish people in the world, till she got, I don't know how, a crotchet of jealousy in her head. This made her frumpish; but we had ne'er an angry word: she only fell a-crying over night, and I went for Italy next morning.—But pray no more on't.—Are you hurt, monsieur?

Stand. But, sir Harry, you'll be serious when I tell you that her ghost appears.

Sir Har. Her ghost! ha! ha! ha! That's pleasant, faith.

Stand. As sure as fate, it walks in my house.

Sir Har. In your house!—Come along, colonel! By the Lard I'll kiss it.

[*Exit with* Colonel Standard.

Marq. Monsieur le capitaine, adieu!

Fire. Adieu! no, sir, you shall follow sir Harry.

Marq. For wat?

Fire. For what! why, d'ye think I'm such a rogue as to part a couple of gentlemen when they're fighting, and not see 'em make an end on't! I think it a less sin to part man and wife.—Come along, sir. [*Exit, pulling* Marquis.

SCENE VI.—*A Room in* Colonel Standard's *House.*

Enter Sir Harry Wildair *and* Colonel Standard.

Sir Har. Well then; this, it seems, is the enchanted chamber. The ghost has pitched upon a handsome apartment however.—Well, colonel, when do you intend to begin?

Stand. What, sir?

Sir Har. To laugh at me; I know you design it.

Stand. Ha! by all that's powerful, there it is.

Enter Ghost *and walks across the stage.*

Sir Har. The devil it is!—Hem! Blood, I'll speak to't.—Vous, mademoiselle Ghost, parlez-vous Français?—No!—Hark ye, Mrs. Ghost, will your ladyship be pleased to inform us who you

are, that we may pay you the respect due to your quality?

Ghost. I am the spirit of thy departed wife.

Sir Har. Are you, faith! why then here's the body of thy living husband, and stand me if you dare.—[*Runs to her and embraces her.*] Ha! 'tis substance, I'm sure.—But hold, lady Ghost, stand off a little, and tell me in good earnest now, whether you are alive or dead?

Angel. [*Throwing off her shroud.*] Alive! alive!—[*Runs and throws her arms about his neck*] and never lived so much as in this moment.

Sir Har. What d'ye think of the ghost now, colonel?—[*She hangs upon him.*] Is it not a very loving ghost?

Stand. Amazement!

Sir Har. Ay, 'tis amazement, truly.—Look ye, madam, I hate to converse so familiarly with spirits: pray keep your distance.

Angel. I am alive, indeed I am.

Sir Har. I don't believe a word on't. [*Moving away.*

Stand. Sir Harry, you're more afraid now than before.

Sir Har. Ay, most men are more afraid of a living wife than a dead one.

Stand. 'Tis good manners to leave you together, however. [*Exit.*

Angel. 'Tis unkind, my dear, after so long and tedious an absence, to act the stranger so. I now shall die in earnest, and must for ever vanish from your sight. [*Weeping and going.*

Sir Har. Hold, hold, madam! Don't be angry, my dear; you took me unprovided: had you but sent me word of your coming, I had got three or four speeches out of Oroonoko and the Mourning Bride upon this occasion, that would have charmed your very heart. But we'll do as well as we can; I'll have the music from both houses; Pawlet and Locket shall contrive for our taste; we'll charm our ears with Abel's voice; feast our eyes with one another; and thus, with all our senses tuned to love, we'll hurl off our clothes, leap into bed, and there—look ye, madam, if I don't welcome you home with raptures more natural and more moving than all the plays in Christendom—I'll say no more.

Angel. As mad as ever!

Sir Har. But ease my wonder first, and let me know the riddle of your death.

Angel. Your unkind departure hence, and your avoiding me abroad, made me resolve, since I could not live with you, to die to all the world besides; I fancied that though it exceeded the force of love, yet the power of grief perhaps might change your humour, and therefore had it given out that I died in France; my sickness at Montpelier, which indeed was next to death, and the affront offered to the body of our ambassador's chaplain at Paris, conduced to have my burial private. This deceived my retinue; and by the assistance of my woman, and your faithful servant, I got into man's clothes, came home into England, and sent him to observe your motions abroad, with orders not to undeceive you till your return.—Here I met you in the quality of beau Banter, your busy brother, under which disguise I have disappointed your design upon my lady Lurewell; and in the form of a ghost, have revenged the scandal she this day threw upon me, and have frighted her sufficiently from lying alone. I did resolve to have frighted you likewise, but you were too hard for me.

Sir Har. How weak, how squeamish, and how fearful, are women when they want to be humoured! and how extravagant, how daring, and how provoking, when they get the impertinent maggot in their head!—But by what means, my dear, could you purchase this double disguise? How came you by my letter to my brother?

Angel. By intercepting all your letters since I came home. But for my ghostly contrivance, good Mrs. Parly (moved by the justness of my cause, and a bribe) was my chief engineer.

Enter Captain Fireball *and* Marquis.

Fire. Sir Harry, if you have a mind to fight it out, there's your man; if not, I have discharged my trust.

Sir Har. Oh, monsieur! won't you salute your mistress, sir?

Marq. Oh, morbleu! Begar, me must run to some oder country now for my religion.

Angel. Oh! what the French marquis! I know him.

Sir Har. Ay, ay, my dear, you do know him, and I can't be angry, because 'tis the fashion for ladies to know everybody. But methinks, madam, that picture now!—hang it, considering 'twas my gift, you might have kept it.—But no matter; my neighbours shall pay for't.

Angel. Picture, my dear! could you think I e'er would part with that? No, of all my jewels, this alone I kept, 'cause 'twas given by you. [*Shows the picture.*

Sir Har. Eh! wonderful!—And what's this? [*Pulling out the other picture.*

Ang. They are very much alike.

Sir Har. So like, that one might fairly pass for t'other.—Monsieur marquis, écoute. You did lie vid my vife, and she did give you de picture for your pain. Eh! come, sir, add to your France politique a little of your native impudence, and tell us plainly how you came by't.

Marq. Begar, monsieur chevalier, wen de Franceman can tell no more lie, den vill he tell trute.—I was acquaint wid de paintre dat draw your lady's picture, an' I give him ten pistole for de copy.—An so me have de picture of all de beauty in London; and by dis politique, me have de reputation to lie wid dem all.

Sir Har. When perhaps your pleasure never reached above a pit-mask in your life.

Marq. An' begar, for dat matre, de natre of women, a pit-mask is as good as de best. De pleasure is noting, de glory is all; à la mode de France. [*Struts out.*

Sir Har. Go thy ways for a true pattern of the vanity, impertinence, subtlety, and ostentation of thy country.—Look ye, captain, give me thy hand; once I was a friend to France; but henceforth I promise to sacrifice my fashions, coaches, wigs, and vanity, to horses, arms, and equipage, and serve my king *in propria persona*, to promote a vigorous war, if there be occasion.

Fire. Bravely said, sir Harry! And if all the beaux in the side-boxes were of your mind, we would send 'em back their L'Abbé, and Balon, and show 'em a new dance to the tune of Harry the Fifth.

Re-enter Colonel Standard *with* Lady Lurewell, Dicky, *and* Parly.

Sir Har. O colonel! such discoveries!

Stand. Sir, I have heard all from your servant; honest Dicky has told me the whole story.

Sir Har. Why then, let Dicky run for the fiddles immediately.

Dick. Oh, sir; I knew what it would come to; they're here already, sir.

[*Goes to the door and brings in* Musicians.

Sir Har. Then, colonel, we'll have a new wedding, and begin it with a dance.—Strike up.

[*A Dance.*

Stand. Now, sir Harry, we have retrieved our wives; yours from death, and mine from the devil; and they are at present very honest. But how shall we keep 'em so?

Angel. By being good husbands, sir; and the great secret for keeping matters right in wedlock, is never to quarrel with your wives for trifles. For we are but babies at best, and must have our playthings, our longings, our vapours, our frights, our monkeys, our china, our fashions, our washes, our patches, our waters, our tattle and impertinence; therefore, I say, 'tis better to let a woman play the fool, than provoke her to play the devil.

Lady Lure. And another rule, gentlemen, let me advise you to observe, never to be jealous; or if you should, be sure never to let your wife think you suspect her; for we are more restrained by the scandal of the lewdness, than by the wickedness of the fact; when once a woman has borne the shame of a whore, she'll despatch you the sin in a moment.

Sir Har. We're obliged to you, ladies, for your advice; and in return, give me leave to give you the definition of a good wife, in the character of my own.—The wit of her conversation never outstrips the conduct of her behaviour: she's affable to all men, free with no man, and only kind to me: often cheerful, sometimes gay, and always pleased, but when I am angry; then sorry, not sullen. The Park, playhouse, and cards, she frequents in compliance with custom; but her diversions of inclination are at home: she's more cautious of a remarkable woman than of a noted wit, well knowing than the infection of her own sex is more catching than the temptation of ours. To all this, she is beautiful to a wonder, scorns all devices that engage a gallant, and uses all arts to please her husband.

So spite of satire 'gainst a married life,
A man is truly bless'd with such a wife.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE,

BY A FRIEND. SPOKEN BY MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS.

Ventre bleu! vere is dis dam poet? vere?
Garzoon! me vil cut off all his two ear:
Je suis enragé?—now he is not here.
He has affront de French! le vilain bête.
De French! your best friend!—you suffre dat?
Parbleu! messieurs, a serait fort ingrate!
Vat have you English, dat you can call your own?
Vat have you of grand plaisir in dis towne,
Vidout it come from France, dat will go down!
Picquet, basset; your vin, your dress, your dance;
'Tis all you see, tout à la mode de France.
De beau dere buy a hondre knick, knack;
He carry out wit, but seldom bring it back:
But den he bring a snuffbox hinge, so small
De joint, you can no see de vark at all,
Cost him five pistole, dat is sheap enough,
In tree year it sal save alf an ounce of snoffe.
De coquette she ave her ratafia dere,
Her gown, her complexion, doux-yeux, her lovere;
As for de cuckol—dat indeed you can make here.
De French it is dat teach de lady wear
De short muff, wit her vite elbow bare;
De beau de large muff, with his sleeve down dere.
[*Pointing to his fingers.*
We teach your vife to ope dere husbands' purses,
To put de furbelo round dere coach, and dere horses.
Garzoon! vee teach you everything de varle:
For vy den your damn poet dare to snarle?
Begar, me vil be revenge upon his play,
Tre tousand réfugiés (Parbleu c'est vrai)
Sall all come here, and damn him upon his tird day.

THE INCONSTANT;

OR,

THE WAY TO WIN HIM.

A Comedy.

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
Corpora.— OVID. Met.

TO RICHARD TIGHE, ESQ.

SIR,—Dedications are the only fashions in the world that are more disliked for being universal; and the reason is, that they very seldom fit the persons they were made for; but I hope to avoid the common obloquy in this address, by laying aside the poet in everything but the *dramatic decorum* of suiting my character to the person.

From the part of *Mirabel* in this play, and another character in one of my former, people are willing to compliment my performance in drawing a gay, splendid, generous, easy, fine young gentleman. My genius, I must confess, has a bent to that kind of description; and my veneration for you, Sir, may pass for unquestionable, since in all those happy accomplishments, you come so near to my darling character, abating his inconstancy.

What an unspeakable blessing is youth and fortune, when a happy understanding comes in, to moderate the desires of the first, and to refine upon the advantages of the latter; when a gentleman is master of all pleasures, but a slave to none; who has travelled, not for the curiosity of the sight, but for the improvement of the mind's eye; and who returns full of everything but himself!—An author might say a great deal more, but a friend, Sir, nay an enemy, must allow you this.

I shall here, Sir, meet with two obstacles, your modesty and your sense; the first as a censor upon the subject, the second as a critic upon the style. But I am obstinate in my purpose, and will maintain what I say to the last drop of my pen; which I may the more boldly undertake, having all the world on my side; nay, I have your very self against you; for by declining to hear your own merit, your friends are authorised the more to proclaim it.

Your generosity and easiness of temper is not only obvious in your common affairs and conversation, but more plainly evident in your darling amusement, that opener and dilater of the mind, music;—from your affection for this delightful study, we may deduce the pleasing harmony that is apparent in all your actions: and be assured, Sir, that a person must be possessed of a very divine soul, who is so much in love with the entertainment of angels.

From your encouragement of music, if there be any poetry here, it has a claim, by the right of kindred, to your favour and affection. You were pleased to honour the representation of this play with your appearance at several times, which flattered my hopes that there might be something in it which your good-nature might excuse. With the honour I here intend for myself, I likewise consult the interest of my nation, by showing a person that is so much a reputation and credit to my country. Besides all this, I was willing to make a handsome compliment to the place of my pupilage; by informing the world that so fine a gentleman had the seeds of his education in the same university, and at the same time with, Sir, your most faithful, and most humble servant,

G. FARQUHAR.

PREFACE.

To give you the history of this play would but cause the reader and the writer a trouble to no purpose; I shall only say that I took the hint from Fletcher's "Wild-Goose Chase;" and to those who say, that I have spoiled the original, I wish no other injury, but that they would say it again.

As to the success of it, I think 'tis but a kind of Cremona business, I have neither lost nor won. I pushed fairly, but the French were prepossessed, and the charms of Gallic heels were too hard for an English brain; but I am proud to own, that I have laid my head at the ladies' feet. The favour was unavoidable, for we are a nation so very fond of improving our understanding, that the instructions of a play does no good, when it comes in competition with the moral of minuet. Pliny tells us in his "Natural History," of elephants that were taught to dance on the ropes; if this could be made practicable now, what a number of subscriptions might be had to bring the Great Mogul out of Fleet-street, and make him dance between the acts!

I remember, that about two years ago, I had a gentleman from France that brought the playhouse some fifty audiences in five months; then why should I be surprised to find a French lady do as much? 'Tis the prettiest way in

the world of despising the French king, to let him see that we can afford money to bribe away his dancers, when he, poor man, has exhausted all his stock, in buying of some pitiful towns and principalities: *cum multis aliis.* What can be a greater compliment to our generous nation, than to have the lady, upon her *retour* to Paris, boast of their splendid entertainment in England, of the complaisance, liberality, and good-nature of a people, that thronged her house so full that she had not room to stick a pin; and left a poor fellow, that had the misfortune of being one of themselves, without one farthing, for half a year's pains that he had taken for their entertainment!

There were some gentlemen in the pit the first night, that took the hint from the prologue to damn the play; but they made such a noise in the execution, that the people took the outcry for a reprieve; so that the darling mischief was overlaid by their over-fondness of the changeling. 'Tis somewhat hard, that gentlemen should debase themselves into a faction of a dozen, to stab a single person, who never had the resolution to face two men at a time; if he has had the misfortune of any misunderstanding with a particular person, he has had a particular person to answer it. But these sparks would be remarkable in their resentment; and if anybody falls under their displeasure, they scorn to call him to a particular account, but will very honourably burn his house, or pick his pocket.

The New-house has perfectly made me a convert by their civility on my sixth night; for, to be friends, and revenged at the same time, I must give them a play, that is,—when I write another. For faction runs so high, that I could wish the senate would suppress the houses, or put in force the act against bribing elections; that house which has the most favours to bestow, will certainly carry it, spite of all poetical justice that would support t'other.

I have heard some people so extravagantly angry at this play, that one would think they had no reason to be displeased at all; whilst some (otherwise men of good sense) have commended it so much, that I was afraid they ridiculed me; so that between both, I am absolutely at a loss what to think on't; for though the cause has come on six days successively, yet the trial, I fancy, is not determined. When our devotion to Lent, and our lady, is over, the business will be brought on again, and then shall we have fair play for our money.

There is a gentleman of the first understanding, and a very good critic, who said of Mr. Wilks, that in this part he out-acted himself, and all men that he ever saw. I would not rob Mr. Wilks, by a worse expression of mine, of a compliment that he so much deserves.

I had almost forgot to tell you, that the turn of plot in the last act, is an adventure of Chevalier de Chastillon in Paris, and matter of fact; but the thing is so universally known, that I think this advice might have been spared, as well as all the rest of the preface, for any good it will do either to me or the play.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OLD MIRABEL, *an aged Gentleman of an odd compound, between the peevishness incident to his years, and his fatherly fondness towards his Son.*
YOUNG MIRABEL, *his Son.*
CAPTAIN DURETETE, *an honest good-natured Fellow, that thinks himself a greater fool than he is.*
DUGARD, *Brother to* ORIANA.
PETIT, *Servant to* DUGARD, *and afterwards to* ORIANA.

ORIANA, *a Lady contracted to* YOUNG MIRABEL, *who would bring him to reason.*
BISARRE, *a whimsical Lady, Friend to* ORIANA, *admired by* DURETETE.
LAMORCE, *a Woman of contrivance.*

Bravoes, Gentlemen, Ladies, Soldiers, Singers, Fiddler, Maids, Page, *and other* Servants.

SCENE,—PARIS.

PROLOGUE,

WRITTEN BY MR. MOTTEUX.

LIKE hungry guests, a sitting audience looks:
Plays are like suppers: poets are the cooks.
The founder's you: the table is this place:
The carvers we: the prologue is the grace.
Each act, a course; each scene, a different dish.
Though we're in Lent, I doubt you're still for flesh.
Satire's the sauce, high-season'd, sharp, and rough:
Kind masks and beaux, I hope you're pepper-proof?
Wit is the wine; but 'tis so scarce the true,
Poets, like vintners, balderdash and brew.
Your surly scenes, where rant and bloodshed join,
Are butcher's meat, a battle's a sirloin.
Your scenes of love, so flowing, soft, and chaste,
Are water-gruel, without salt or taste.
Bawdy's fat venison, which, though stale, can please:
Your rakes love hauts-goûts, like your damn'd French cheese.
Your rarity for the fair guest to gape on,
Is your nice squeaker, or Italian capon;
Or your French virgin-pullet, garnish'd round,
And dress'd with sauce of some—four hundred pound.
An opera, like an oglio, nicks the age;
Farce is the hasty-pudding of the stage.
For when you're treated with indifferent cheer,
Ye can dispense with slender stage-coach fare.
A pastoral's whipp'd cream; stage whims, mere trash;
And tragi-comedy, half fish half flesh.
But comedy, that, that's the darling cheer.
This night we hope you'll an Inconstant bear:
Wild-fowl is liked in playhouse all the year.
Yet since each mind betrays a different taste,
And every dish scarce pleases every guest,
If aught you relish, do not damn the rest.
This favour craved, up let the music strike:
You're welcome all.—Now fall to where you like.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter DUGARD *and* PETIT.

Dug. Sirrah, what's o'clock?

Pet. Turned of eleven, sir.

Dug. No more! We have rid a swinging pace from Nemours since two this morning! Petit, run to Rousseau's, and bespeak a dinner at a louis-d'or a head, to be ready by one.

Pet. How many will there be of you, sir?

Dug. Let me see; Mirabel one, Duretete two; myself three—

Pet. And I four.

Dug. How now, sir, at your old travelling familiarity! When abroad, you had some freedom for want of better company; but among my friends at Paris pray remember your distance.—Begone, sir!—[*Exit* PETIT.] This fellow's wit was necessary abroad, but he's too cunning for a domestic; I must dispose of him some way else.—Who's here? Old Mirabel, and my sister!

Enter Old MIRABEL *and* ORIANA.

My dearest sister!

Ori. My brother! welcome!

Dug. Monsieur Mirabel! I'm heartily glad to see you.

Old Mir. Honest Mr. Dugard, by the blood of the Mirabels I'm your most humble servant.

Dug. Why, sir, you cast your skin sure! you're brisk and gay, lusty health about you, no sign of age but your silver hairs.

Old Mir. Silver hairs! then they are quicksilver hairs, sir. Whilst I have golden pockets, let my hairs be silver an they will. Adsbud, sir, I can dance, and sing, and drink, and—no, I can't wench. But, Mr. Dugard, no news of my son Bob in all your travels?

Dug. Your son's come home, sir.

Old Mir. Come home! Bob come home? By the blood of the Mirabels, Mr. Dugard, what say ye?

Ori. Mr. Mirabel returned, sir?

Dug. He's certainly come, and you may see him within this hour or two.

Old Mir. Swear it, Mr. Dugard, presently swear it.

Dug. Sir, he came to town with me this morning, I left him at the bagnieur's, being a little disordered after riding, and I shall see him again presently.

Old Mir. What! and he was ashamed to ask blessing with his boots on? A nice dog! Well, and how fares the young rogue, ha?

Dug. A fine gentleman, sir. He'll be his own messenger.

Old Mir. A fine gentleman! But is the rogue like me still?

Dug. Why yes, sir; he's very like his mother, and as like you as most modern sons are to their fathers.

Old Mir. Why, sir, don't you think that I begat him?

Dug. Why yes, sir; you married his mother, and he inherits your estate. He's very like you, upon my word.

Ori. And pray, brother, what's become of his honest companion, Duretete?

Dug. Who, the captain? The very same, he went abroad; he's the only Frenchman I ever knew that could not change.—Your son, Mr. Mirabel, is more obliged to nature for that fellow's composition than for his own; for he's more happy in Duretete's folly than his own wit. In short, they are as inseparable as finger and thumb, but the first instance in the world, I believe, of opposition in friendship.

Old Mir. Very well; will he be home to dinner, think ye?

Dug. Sir, he has ordered me to bespeak a dinner for us at Rousseau's at a louis-d'or a head.

Old Mir. A louis-d'or a head! Well said, Bob; by the blood of the Mirabels, Bob's improved. But, Mr. Dugard, was it so civil of Bob to visit monsieur Rousseau before his own natural father? eh!—Heark'ee Oriana, what think you now, of a fellow that can eat and drink ye a whole louis-d'or at a sitting? He must be as strong as Hercules; life and spirit in abundance. Before Gad I don't wonder at these men of quality, that their own wives can't serve 'em! A louis-d'or a head!—'tis enough to stock the whole nation with bastards, 'tis faith.—Mr. Dugard, I leave you with your sister. [*Exit.*

Dug. Well, sister, I need not ask you how you do, your looks resolve me; fair, tall, well-shaped; you're almost grown out of my remembrance.

Ori. Why, truly, brother, I look pretty well, thank nature and my toilet; I have 'scaped the jaundice, green-sickness, and the small-pox; I eat three meals a day, and very merry when up, and sleep soundly when I'm down.

Dug. But, sister, you remember that upon my going abroad you would choose this old gentleman for your guardian; he's no more related to our family than Prester John, and I have no reason to think you mistrusted my management of your fortune, therefore pray be so kind as to tell me without reservation the true cause of making such a choice.

Ori. Look'ee, brother, you were going a rambling, and 'twas proper lest I should go a rambling too, that somebody should take care of me. Old monsieur Mirabel is an honest gentleman, was our father's friend, and has a young lady in his house, whose company I like, and who has chosen him for her guardian as well as I.

Dug. Who, mademoiselle Bisarre?

Ori. The same; we live merrily together, without scandal or reproach; we make much of the old gentleman between us, and he takes care of us; we eat what we like, go to bed when we please, rise when we will, all the week we dance and sing, and upon Sundays go first to church and then to the play. Now, brother, besides these motives for choosing this gentleman for my guardian, perhaps I had some private reasons.

Dug. Not so private as you imagine, sister; your love to young Mirabel; no secret I can assure

you, but so public that all your friends are ashamed on't.

Ori. O' my word then, my friends are very bashful; though I'm afraid, sir, that those people are not ashamed enough at their own crimes, who have so many blushes to spare for the faults of their neighbours.

Dug. Ay, but sister, the people say—

Ori. Psha, hang the people! they'll talk treason, and profane their Maker; must we therefore infer that our king is a tyrant, and religion a cheat? Look'ee, brother, their court of inquiry is a tavern, and their informer claret. They think as they drink, and swallow reputations like loches: a lady's health goes briskly round with the glass, but her honour is lost in the toast.

Dug. Ay, but sister, there is still something—

Ori. If there be something, brother, 'tis none of the people's something; marriage is my thing, and I'll stick to't.

Dug. Marriage! young Mirabel marry! he'll build churches sooner. Take heed, sister, though your honour stood proof to his home-bred assaults, you must keep a stricter guard for the future; he has now got the foreign air and the Italian softness, his wit's improved by converse, his behaviour finished by observation, and his assurance confirmed by success. Sister, I can assure you he has made his conquests; and 'tis a plague upon your sex, to be the soonest deceived by those very men that you know have been false to others.

Ori. Then why will you tell me of his conquests? for I must confess there is no title to a woman's favour so engaging as the repute of a handsome dissimulation. There is something of a pride to see a fellow lie at our feet, that has triumphed over so many; and then, I don't know, we fancy he must have something extraordinary about him to please us, and that we have something engaging about us to secure him, so we can't be quiet, till we put ourselves upon the lay of being both disappointed.

Dug. But then, sister, he's as fickle—

Ori. For Gad's sake, brother, tell me no more of his faults, for if you do I shall run mad for him. Say no more, sir, let me but get him into the bands of matrimony, I'll spoil his wandering, I'll warrant him. I'll do his business that way, never fear.

Dug. Well, sister, I won't pretend to understand the engagements between you and your lover; I expect, when you have need of my counsel or assistance, you will let me know more of your affairs. Mirabel is a gentleman, and as far as my honour and interest can reach, you may command me to the furtherance of your happiness. In the mean time, sister, I have a great mind to make you a present of another humble servant; a fellow I took up at Lyons, who has served me honestly ever since.

Ori. Then why will you part with him?

Dug. He has gained so insufferably on my good-humour, that he's grown too familiar; but the fellow's cunning, and may be serviceable to you in your affair with Mirabel. Here he comes.

Re-enter PETIT.

Well, sir, have you been at Rousseau's?

Pet. Yes, sir; and who should I find there but Mr. Mirabel and the captain, hatching as warmly over a tub of ice as two hen-pheasants over a brood.—They would let me bespeak nothing, for they had dined before I came.

Dug. Come, sir, you shall serve my sister: I shall still continue kind to you, and if your lady recommends your diligence upon trial, I'll use my interest to advance you; you have sense enough to expect preferment. Here, sirrah, here's ten guineas for thee, get thyself a drugget suit and a puff-wig, and so—I dub thee gentleman usher.—Sister, I must go put myself in repair, you may expect me in the evening.—Wait on your lady home, Petit. [*Exit.*

Pet. A chair! a chair! a chair! [*Calls.*

Ori. No, no, I'll walk home, 'tis but next door. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Tavern.*

YOUNG MIRABEL *and* Captain DURETETE *are discovered rising from table.*

Young Mir. Welcome to Paris once more, my dear captain; we have eat heartily, drank roundly, paid plentifully, and let it go for once. I liked everything but our women, they looked so lean and tawdry, poor creatures! 'Tis a sure sign the army is not paid.—Give me the plump Venetian, brisk and sanguine, that smiles upon me like the glowing sun, and meets my lips like sparkling wine, her person shining as the glass, and spirit like the foaming liquor.

Dur. Ay, Mirabel, Italy I grant you; but for our women here in France, they are such thin, brawn-fallen jades, a man may as well make a bedfellow of a cane chair.

Young Mir. France! a light, unseasoned country, nothing but feathers, foppery, and fashions; we're fine indeed, so are our coach-horses; men say we're courtiers, men abuse us; that we are wise and politic, *non credo, signor:* that our women have wit;—parrots, mere parrots!—assurance and a good memory sets them up.—There's nothing on this side the Alps worth my humble service t'ye.—Ha! *Roma la Santa,* Italy for my money; their customs, gardens, buildings, paintings, music, policies, wine, and women! the paradise of the world.—Not pestered with a parcel of precise, old gouty fellows, that would debar their children every pleasure that they themselves are past the sense of; commend me to the Italian familiarity—*Here son; there's fifty crowns, go pay your whore her week's allowance.*

Dur. Ay, these are your fathers for you, that understand the necessities of young men; not like our musty dads who, because they cannot fish themselves, would muddy the water, and spoil the sport of them that can. But now you talk of the plump, what d'ye think of a Dutch woman?

Young Mir. A Dutch woman!—too compact, nay, everything among 'em is so; a Dutch man is thick, a Dutch woman is squab, a Dutch horse is round, a Dutch dog is short, a Dutch ship is broad-bottomed; and, in short, one would swear the whole products of the country were cast in the same mould with their cheeses.

Dur. Ay, but, Mirabel, you have forgot the English ladies.

Young Mir. The women of England were excellent, did they not take such unsufferable pains to ruin what nature has made so incomparably well; they would be delicate creatures indeed, could they but thoroughly arrive at the French mien, or entirely

let it alone; for they only spoil a very good air of their own by an awkward imitation of ours; their parliaments and our tailors give laws to their three kingdoms. But come, Duretete, let us mind the business in hand, mistresses we must have, and must take up with the manufacture of the place; and, upon a competent diligence, we shall find those in Paris shall match the Italians from top to toe.

Dur. Ay, Mirabel, you will do well enough, but what will become of your friend; you know I am so plaguy bashful, so naturally an ass upon these occasions, that—

Young Mir. Psha, you must be bolder, man! Travel three years, and bring home such a baby as bashfulness! A great lusty fellow! and a soldier! fy upon't!

Dur. Look'ee, sir, I can visit, and I can ogle a little,—as thus, or thus now. Then I can kiss abundantly, and make a shift to—but, if they chance to give me a forbidding look, as some women, you know, have a devilish cast with their eyes,—or, if they cry—*What d'ye mean? what d'ye take me for? Fy, sir! remember who I am, sir.—A person of quality to be used at this rate!* —Egad, I'm struck as flat as a frying-pan.

Young Mir. Words o' course! never mind 'em, turn you about upon your heel with a janty air; hum out the end of an old song; cut a cross caper, and at her again.

Dur. [*Imitates him.*] No, hang it, 'twill never do!—Oons, what did my father mean by sticking me up in a university, or to think that I should gain anything by my head, in a nation whose genius lies all in their heels! Well, if ever I come to have children of my own, they shall have the education of the country, they shall learn to dance before they can walk, and be taught to sing before they speak.

Young Mir. Come, come, throw off that childish humour, put on assurance, there's no avoiding it; stand all hazards, thou'rt a stout lusty fellow, and hast a good estate; look bluff, Hector, you have a good side-box face, a pretty impudent face; so, that's pretty well.—[*Aside.*] This fellow went abroad like an ox, and is returned like an ass.

Dur. Let me see now, how I look.—[*Pulls out a pocket-glass, and looks on't.*] A side-box face, say you!—Egad, I don't like it, Mirabel.—Fy, sir! don't abuse your friends, I could not wear such a face for the best countess in Christendom.

Young Mir. Why, can't you, blockhead, as well as I?

Dur. Why, thou hast impudence to set a good face upon anything; I would change half my gold for half thy brass, with all my heart.—Who comes here? Odso, Mirabel, your father!

Enter OLD MIRABEL.

Old Mir. Where's Bob, dear Bob?

Young Mir. Your blessing, sir.

Old Mir. My blessing! Damn ye, you young rogue; why did not you come to see your father first, sirrah? My dear boy, I am heartily glad to see thee, my dear child, faith!—Captain Duretete, by the blood of the Mirabels, I'm yours.—Well, my lads, ye look bravely, i'faith.—Bob, hast got any money left?

Young Mir. Not a farthing, sir.

Old Mir. Why, then, I won't gi'thee a souse.

Young Mir. Sir, I did but jest, here's ten pistoles.

Old Mir. Why, then, here's ten more; I love to be charitable to those that don't want it.—Well, and how d'ye like Italy, my boys?

Young Mir. Oh, the garden of the world, sir! Rome, Naples, Venice, Milan, and a thousand others—all fine.

Old Mir. Ay, say you so! And they say that Chiari is very fine too.

Dur. Indifferent, sir, very indifferent: a very scurvy air, the most unwholesome to a French constitution in the world.

Young Mir. Psha, nothing on't! these rascally Gazetteers have misinformed you.

Old Mir. Misinformed me! Oons, sir, were not we beaten there?

Young Mir. Beaten, sir! the French beaten!

Old Mir. Why, how was it, pray, sweet sir?

Young Mir. Sir, the captain will tell you.

Dur. No, sir, your son will tell you.

Young Mir. The captain was in the action, sir.

Dur. Your son saw more than I, sir, for he was a looker-on.

Old Mir. Confound ye both for a brace of cowards! here are no Germans to overhear you; why don't ye tell me how it was?

Young Mir. Why, then, you must know, that we marched up a body of the finest, bravest, well-dressed fellows in the universe: our commanders at the head of us, all lace and feather, like so many beaux at a ball.—I don't believe there was a man of 'em but could dance a Charmer, morbleu!

Old Mir. Dance! very well, pretty fellows, faith!

Young Mir. We capered up to their very trenches, and there saw peeping over a parcel of scarecrow, olive-coloured, gunpowdered fellows, as ugly as the devil.

Dur. Egad, I shall never forget the looks of 'em while I have breath to fetch.

Young Mir. They were so civil indeed as to welcome us with their cannon; but, for the rest, we found 'em such unmannerly, rude, unsociable dogs, that we grew tired of their company, and so we e'en danced back again.

Old Mir. And did ye all come back?

Young Mir. No, two or three thousand of us stayed behind.

Old Mir. Why, Bob, why?

Young Mir. Psha!—because they could not come that night.—But, come, sir, we were talking of something else; pray how does your lovely charge, the fair Oriana?

Old Mir. Ripe, sir, just ripe; you'll find it better engaging with her than with the Germans, let me tell you.—And what would you say, my young Mars, if I had a Venus for thee too?—Come, Bob, your apartment is ready, and, pray, let your friend be my guest too; you shall command the house between ye, and I'll be as merry as the best of you.

Young Mir. Bravely said, father!—
Let misers bend their age with niggard cares,
And starve themselves to pamper hungry heirs;
Who, living, stint their sons what youth may crave
And make 'em revel o'er a father's grave.
The stock on which I grew, does still dispense
Its genial sap into the blooming branch;
The fruit, he knows, from his own root is grown,
And therefore soothes those passions once his own.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Old MIRABEL'S *House*.

ORIANA *and* BISARRE *discovered*.

Bis. And you love this young rake, d'ye?

Ori. Yes.

Bis. In spite of all his ill usage?

Ori. I can't help it.

Bis. What's the matter w'ye?

Ori. Psha!

Bis. Um!—before that any young, lying, swearing, flattering, rakehelly fellow, should play such tricks with me, I would wear my teeth to the stumps with lime and chalk. Oh, the devil take all your Cassandras and Cleopatras for me.—Prithee mind your airs, modes, and fashions; your stays, gowns, and furbelows. Hark'ee, my dear, have you got home your furbelowed smocks yet?

Ori. Prithee be quiet, Bisarre; you know I can be as mad as you, when this Mirabel is out of my head.

Bis. Psha! would he were out, or in, or some way to make you easy.—I warrant now you'll play the fool when he comes, and say you love him; eh?

Ori. Most certainly; I can't dissemble, Bisarre.—Besides, 'tis past that, we're contracted.

Bis. Contracted! a-lack-a-day, poor thing! What, you have changed rings, or broken an old broad-piece between you! Hark'ee, child, han't you broke something else between ye?

Ori. No, no, I can assure you.

Bis. Then, what d'ye whine for? Whilst I kept that in my power, I would make a fool of any fellow in France. Well, I must confess, I do love a little coquetting with all my heart; my business should be to break gold with my lover one hour, and crack my promise the next; he should find me one day with a prayer-book in my hand, and with a play-book another. He should have my consent to buy the wedding-ring, and the next moment would I laugh in his face.

Ori. Oh, my dear, were there no greater tie upon my heart, than there is upon my conscience, I would soon throw the contract out a-doors; but the mischief on't is, I am so fond of being tied, that I'm forced to be just, and the strength of my passion keeps down the inclination of my sex.—But here's the old gentleman.

Enter Old MIRABEL.

Old Mir. Where's my wenches? where's my two little girls? Eh! have a care, look to yourselves, faith, they're a-coming, the travellers are a-coming. Well, which of you two will be my daughter-in-law now? Bisarre, Bisarre, what say you, madcap? Mirabel is a pure wild fellow.

Bis. I like him the worse.

Old Mir. You lie, honey, you like him the better, indeed you do.—What say you, my t'other little filbert, eh!

Ori. I suppose the gentleman will choose for himself, sir.

Old Mir. Why, that's discreetly said; and so he shall.

Enter Young MIRABEL *and* DURETETE, *they salute the ladies*.

Bob, heark'ee! you shall marry one of the girls, sirrah.

Young Mir. Sir, I'll marry 'em both, if you please.

Bis. He'll find that one may serve his turn. [*Aside*.

Old Mir. Both! why, you young dog, d'ye banter me? Come, sir, take your choice.—Duretete, you shall have your choice too; but Robin shall choose first.—Come, sir, begin.

Young Mir. Well, I an't the first son that has made his father's dwelling a bawdy-house—let me see.

Old Mir. Well, which d'ye like?

Young Mir. Both.

Old Mir. But which will you marry?

Young Mir. Neither.

Old Mir. Neither! Don't make me angry now, Bob; pray don't make me angry. Look'ee, sirrah, if I don't dance at your wedding to-morrow, I shall be very glad to cry at your grave.

Young Mir. That's a bull, father.

Old Mir. A bull! why, how now, ungrateful sir, did I make thee a man, that thou shouldst make me a beast?

Young Mir. Your pardon, sir, I only meant your expression.

Old Mir. Heark'ee, Bob, learn better manners to your father before strangers: I won't be angry this time,—but oons, if ever you do't again, you rascal; remember what I say. [*Exit*.

Young Mir. Psha! what does the old fellow mean by mewing me up here with a couple of green girls!—Come, Duretete, will you go?

Ori. I hope, Mr. Mirabel, you han't forgot—

Young Mir. No, no, madam, I han't forgot, I have brought you a thousand little Italian curiosities; I'll assure you, madam, as far as a hundred pistoles would reach, I han't forgot the least circumstance.

Ori. Sir, you misunderstand me.

Young Mir. Odso, the relics, madam, from Rome. I do remember now you made a vow of chastity before my departure; a vow of chastity, or something like it; was it not, madam?

Ori. O sir, I'm answered at present. [*Exit*.

Young Mir. She was coming full mouth upon me with her contract.—Would I might despatch the t'other! [*Aside*.

Dur. Mirabel,—that lady there, observe her, she's wondrous pretty faith, and seems to have but few words; I like her mainly: speak to her, man, prithee speak to her. [*Aside to* MIRABEL.

Young Mir. Madam, here's a gentleman, who declares—

Dur. Madam, don't believe him, I declare nothing.—What the devil do you mean, man?

Young Mir. He says, madam, that you are beautiful as an angel.

Dur. He tells a damned lie, madam; I say no such thing.—Are you mad, Mirabel? why, I shall drop down with shame.

Young Mir. And so, madam, not doubting but

your ladyship may like him as well as he does you, I think it proper to leave you together. [*Going.*

Dur. Hold, hold!—Why Mirabel, friend, sure you won't be so barbarous as to leave me alone! Prithee speak to her for yourself, as it were. Lord, Lord, that a Frenchman should want impudence!

Young Mir. You look mighty demure, madam!—She's deaf, captain.

Dur. I had much rather have her dumb.

Young Mir. The gravity of your air, madam, promises some extraordinary fruits from your study, which moves us with a curiosity to inquire the subject of your ladyship's contemplation.—Not a word!

Dur. I hope in the Lord she's speechless; if she be, she's mine this moment.—Mirabel, d'ye think a woman's silence can be natural?

Bis. But the forms that logicians introduce, and which proceed from simple enumeration, are dubitable, and proceed only upon admittance—

Young Mir. Hoyty toyty! what a plague have we here? Plato in petticoats!

Dur. Ay, ay, let her go on, man; she talks in my own mother-tongue.

Bis. 'Tis exposed to invalidity from a contradictory instance, looks only upon common operations, and is infinite in its termination.

Young Mir. Rare pedantry!

Dur. Axioms! axioms! self-evident principles!

Bis. Then the ideas wherewith the mind is preoccupate—O gentlemen, I hope you'll pardon my cogitation; I was involved in a profound point of philosophy; but I shall discuss it somewhere else, being satisfied that the subject is not agreeable to you sparks, that profess the vanity of the times. [*Exit.*

Young Mir. Go thy way, goodwife Bias. Do you hear, Duretete? dost hear this starched piece of austerity?

Dur. She's mine, man; she's mine: my own talent to a T. I'll match her in dialectics, faith. I was seven years at the university, man; nursed up with Barbara, Celarunt, Darii, Ferio, Baralipton. Did you never know, man, that 'twas metaphysics made me an ass? it was, faith. Had she talked a word of singing, dancing, plays, fashions, or the like, I had foundered in the first step; but as she is—Mirabel, wish me joy.

Young Mir. You don't mean marriage, I hope?

Dur. No, no, I'm a man of more honour.

Young Mir. Bravely resolved, captain! Now for thy credit, warm me this frozen snow-ball, 'twill be a conquest above the Alps.

Dur. But will you promise to be always near me?

Young Mir. Upon all occasions, never fear.

Dur. Why then, you shall see me in two moments make an induction from my love to her hand, from her hand to her mouth, from her mouth to her heart, and so conclude in her bed, categorimatice. [*Exit.*

Young Mir. Now the game begins, and my fool is entered.—But here comes one to spoil my sport; now shall I be teased to death with this old-fashioned contract. I should love her too, if I might do it my own way, but she'll do nothing without witnesses forsooth: I wonder women can be so immodest.

Re-enter ORIANA.

Well, madam, why d'ye follow me?

Ori. Well, sir, why do you shun me?

Young Mir. 'Tis my humour, madam, and I am naturally swayed by inclination.

Ori. Have you forgot our contract, sir?

Young Mir. All I remember of that contract is, that it was made some three years ago, and that's enough in conscience to forget the rest on't.

Ori. 'Tis sufficient, sir, to recollect the passing of it, for in that circumstance, I presume, lies the force of the obligation.

Young Mir. Obligations, madam, that are forced upon the will are no tie upon the conscience; I was a slave to my passion when I passed the instrument, but the recovery of my freedom makes the contract void.

Ori. Sir, you can't make that a compulsion which was your own choice. Besides, sir, a subjection to your own desires has not the virtue of a forcible constraint: and you will find, sir, that to plead your passion for the killing of a man will hardly exempt you from the justice of the punishment.

Young Mir. And so, madam, you make the sin of murder and the crime of a contract the very same, because that hanging and matrimony are so much alike?

Ori. Come, Mr. Mirabel, these expressions I expected from the raillery of your humour, but I hope for very different sentiments from your honour and generosity.

Young Mir. Look'ee, madam, as for my generosity, 'tis at your service, with all my heart: I'll keep you a coach and six horses, if you please, only permit me to keep my honour to myself; for I can assure you, madam, that the thing called honour is a circumstance absolutely unnecessary in a natural correspondence between male and female, and he's a madman that lays it out, considering its scarcity, upon any such trivial occasions. There's honour required of us by our friends, and honour due to our enemies, and they return it to us again; but I never heard of a man that left but an inch of his honour in a woman's keeping, that could ever get the least account on't. Consider, madam, you have no such thing among ye, and 'tis a main point of policy to keep no faith with reprobates: thou art a pretty little reprobate, and so get thee about thy business.

Ori. Well, sir, even all this I will allow to the gaiety of your temper; your travels have improved your talent of talking, but they are not of force, I hope, to impair your morals.

Young Mir. Morals! why there 'tis again now. I tell thee, child, there is not the least occasion for morals in any business between you and I. Don't you know that of all commerce in the world there is no such cozenage and deceit as in the traffic between man and woman; we study all our lives long how to put tricks upon one another. What is your business now, from the time you throw away your artificial babies, but how to get natural ones with the most advantage? No fowler lays abroad more nets for his game, nor a hunter for his prey, than you do to catch poor innocent men. Why do you sit three or four hours at your toilet in a morning? Only with a villanous design to make some poor fellow a fool before night. What are your languishing looks, your studied airs and

affectations, but so many baits and devices to delude men out of their dear liberty and freedom? What d'ye sigh for? what d'ye weep for? what d'ye pray for? Why for a husband: that is, you implore Providence to assist you in the just and pious design of making the wisest of his creatures a fool, and the head of the creation a slave.

Ori. Sir, I am proud of my power, and am resolved to use it.

Young Mir. Hold, hold, madam! not so fast.—As you have variety of vanities to make coxcombs of us; so we have vows, oaths, and protestations, of all sorts and sizes, to make fools of you. As you are very strange and whimsical creatures, so we are allowed as unaccountable ways of managing you. And this, in short, my dear creature, is our present condition; I have sworn and lied briskly to gain my ends of you, your ladyship has patched and painted violently to gain your ends of me: but, since we are both disappointed, let us make a drawn battle, and part clear of both sides.

Ori. With all my heart, sir; give me up my contract, and I'll never see your face again.

Young Mir. Indeed I won't, child.

Ori. What, sir, neither do one nor t'other?

Young Mir. No, you shall die a maid, unless you please to be otherwise upon my terms.

Ori. What do you intend by this, sir?

Young Mir. Why, to starve you into compliance. Look'ee, you shall never marry any man; and you had as good let me do you a kindness as a stranger.

Ori. Sir, you're a—

Young Mir. What am I, mistress?

Ori. A villain, sir.

Young Mir. I'm glad on't. I never knew an honest fellow in my life but was a villain upon these occasions. Han't you drawn yourself now into a very pretty dilemma? Ha! ha! ha! the poor lady has made a vow of virginity, when she thought of making a vow for the contrary. Was ever poor woman so cheated into chastity?

Ori. Sir, my fortune is equal to yours, my friends as powerful, and both shall be put to the test, to do me justice.

Young Mir. What! you'll force me to marry you, will ye?

Ori. Sir, the law shall.

Young Mir. But the law can't force me to do anything else, can it?

Ori. Psha, I despise thee,—monster!

Young Mir. Kiss and be friends then. Don't cry, child, and you shall have your sugar-plum. Come, madam, d'ye think I could be so unreasonable as to make ye fast all your life long? No, I did but jest, you shall have your liberty; here, take your contract, and give me mine.

Ori. No, I won't.

Young Mir. Eh! what, is the girl a fool?

Ori. No, sir, you shall find me cunning enough to do myself justice; and since I must not depend upon your love, I'll be revenged, and force you to marry me out of spite.

Young Mir. Then I'll beat thee out of spite; make a most confounded husband.

Ori. O sir, I shall match ye! a good husband makes a good wife at any time.

Young Mir. I'll rattle down your china about your ears.

Ori. And I'll rattle about the city to run you in debt for more.

Young Mir. Your face-mending toilet shall fly out of the window.

Ori. And your face-mending periwig shall fly after it.

Young Mir. I'll tear the furbelow off your clothes, and when you swoon for vexation, you shan't have a penny to buy a bottle of hartshorn.

Ori. And you, sir, shall have hartshorn in abundance.

Young Mir. I'll keep as many mistresses as I have coach-horses.

Ori. And I'll keep as many gallants as you have grooms.

Young Mir. I'll lie with your woman before your face.

Ori. Have a care of your valet behind your back.

Young Mir. But, sweet madam, there is such a thing as a divorce.

Ori. But, sweet sir, there is such a thing as alimony: so divorce on, and spare not. [*Exit.*

Young Mir. Ay, that separate maintenance is the devil: there's their refuge. O' my conscience, one would take cuckoldom for a meritorious action, because the women are so handsomely rewarded for't. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Saloon in* Old Mirabel's *House, with chambers adjoining.*

Enter Captain Duretete *and* Petit.

Dur. And she's mighty peevish, you say?

Pet. O sir, she has a tongue as long as my leg, and talks so crabbedly, you would think she always spoke Welsh!

Dur. That's an odd language, methinks, for her philosophy.

Pet. But sometimes she will sit you half a day without speaking a word, and talk oracles all the while by the wrinkles of her forehead, and the motions of her eyebrows.

Dur. Nay, I shall match her in philosophical ogles, faith; that's my talent: I can talk best, you must know, when I say nothing.

Pet. But d'ye ever laugh, sir?

Dur. Laugh! won't she endure laughing?

Pet. Why she's a critic, sir; she hates a jest, for fear it should please her; and nothing keeps her in humour but what gives her the spleen. And then for logic, and all that, you know—

Dur. Ay, ay, I'm prepared, I have been practising hard words, and no sense, this hour, to entertain her.

Pet. Then place yourself behind this screen, that you may have a view of her behaviour before you begin.

Dur. I long to engage her, lest I should forget my lesson.

Pet. Here she comes, sir, I must fly.

[*Exit.—Captain* Duretete *conceals himself behind the screen.*

Enter Bisarre, *with a book in her hand, and* Maid.

Bis. Psha, hang books! they sour our temper, spoil our eyes, and ruin our complexions.

[*Throws away the book.*

Dur. [*Aside, peeping out.*] Eh! the devil such a word there is in all Aristotle.

Bis. Come, wench, let's be free; call in the fiddle, there's nobody near us. [*Exit Maid.*

Dur. Would to the Lord there was not! [*Aside.*

Re-enter Maid *with* Fiddler.

Bis. Here, friend, a minuet!—Quicker time!—Ha! would we had a man or two.

Dur. [*Stealing away.*] You shall have the devil sooner, my dear dancing philosopher. [*Aside.*

Bis. Uds my life!—Here's one.

[*Runs to* DURETETE *and hales him back.*

Dur. Is all my learned preparation come to this? [*Aside.*

Bis. Come, sir, don't be ashamed, that's my good boy:—you're very welcome, we wanted such a one.—Come, strike up.—I know you dance well, sir, you're finely shaped for't.—Come, come, sir; quick, quick, you miss the time else.

Dur. But, madam, I come to talk with you.

Bis. Ay, ay, talk as you dance, talk as you dance; come.

Dur. But we were talking of dialectics.

Bis. Hang dialectics!—[*To the* Fiddler.] Mind the time:—quicker, sirrah!—Come—and how d'ye find yourself now, sir?

Dur. In a fine breathing sweat, doctor.

Bis. All the better, patient, all the better.—Come, sir, sing now, sing, I know you sing well; I see you have a singing face; a heavy dull sonata face.

Dur. Who, I sing?

Bis. Oh, you're modest, sir!—But come, sit down, closer, closer.—Here, a bottle of wine.—Come, sir, fa, la, la; sing, sir.

Dur. But, madam, I came to talk with you.

Bis. O sir, you shall drink first. Come, fill me a bumper—here, sir, bless the king.

Dur. Would I were out of his dominions!—By this light, she'll make me drunk too! [*Aside.*

Bis. Oh, pardon me, sir, you shall do me right, fill it higher.—Now, sir, can you drink a health under your leg?

Dur. Rare philosophy that, faith! [*Aside.*

Bis. Come, off with it, to the bottom.—Now, how d'ye like me, sir?

Dur. Oh, mighty well, madam.

Bis. You see how a woman's fancy varies, sometimes splenetic and heavy, then gay and frolicsome.—And how d'ye like the humour?

Dur. Good madam, let me sit down to answer you, for I am heartily tired.

Bis. Fy upon't! a young man, and tired! Up for shame, and walk about, action becomes us:—a little faster, sir.—What d'ye think now of my lady La Pale, and lady Coquette the duke's fair daughter? Ha! are they not brisk lasses? Then there is black Mrs. Bellair, and brown Mrs. Bellface.

Dur. They are all strangers to me, madam.

Bis. But let me tell you, sir, that brown is not always despicable.—O Lard, sir, if young Mrs. Bagatelle had kept herself single till this time o' day, what a beauty there had been! And then, you know, the charming Mrs. Monkeylove, the fair gem of St. Germains.

Dur. Upon my soul, I don't.

Bis. And then you must have heard of the English beau, Spleenamore, how unlike a gentleman—

Dur. Hey—not a syllable on't, as I hope to be saved, madam!

Bis. No! why then play me a jig.—Come, sir.

Dur. By this light I cannot, faith, madam, I have sprained my leg.

Bis. Then sit you down, sir. And now tell me what's your business with me? what's your errand? quick, quick, despatch!—Odso, may be you are some gentleman's servant, that have brought me a letter, or a haunch of venison.

Dur. 'Sdeath, madam, do I look like a carrier?

Bis. Oh, cry your mercy, sir! I saw you just now, I mistook you, upon my word: you are one of the travelling gentlemen.—And pray, sir, how do all our impudent friends in Italy?

Dur. Madam, I came to wait on you with a more serious intention than your entertainment has answered.

Bis. Sir, your intention of waiting on me was the greatest affront imaginable, howe'er your expressions may turn it to a compliment: your visit, sir, was intended as a prologue to a very scurvy play, of which Mr. Mirabel and you so handsomely laid the plot.—*Marry! no, no, I'm a man of more honour.*—Where's your honour? where's your courage now? Ads my life, sir, I have a great mind to kick you!—Go, go to your fellow-rake now, rail at my sex, and get drunk for vexation, and write a lampoon!—But I must have you to know, sir, that my reputation is above the scandal of a libel, my virtue is sufficiently approved to those whose opinion is my interest: and for the rest, let them talk what they will; for when I please I'll be what I please, in spite of you and all mankind: and so, my dear man of honour, if you be tired, con over this lesson, and sit there till I come to you. [*Exit*, Maid *and* Fiddler *following.*

Dur. Tum ti dum.—[*Sings.*] Ha! ha! ha! *Ads my life! I have a great mind to kick you!*—Oons and confusion!—[*Starts up.*] Was ever man so abused!—Ay, Mirabel set me on.

Re-enter PETIT.

Petit. Well, sir, how d'ye find yourself?

Dur. You son of a nine-eyed whore, d'ye come to abuse me? I'll kick you with a vengeance, you dog! [PETIT *runs off, and* DURETETE *after him.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Saloon in* Old MIRABEL'S *House.*

Old MIRABEL *and* Young MIRABEL *discovered.*

Old Mir. Bob, come hither, Bob.

Young Mir. Your pleasure, sir?

Old Mir. Are not you a great rogue, sirrah?

Young Mir. That's a little out of my comprehension, sir, for I've heard say, that I resemble my father.

Old Mir. Your father is your very humble slave. —I tell thee what, child, thou art a very pretty fellow, and I love thee heartily; and a very great villain, and I hate thee mortally.

Young Mir. Villain, sir! then I must be a very impudent one, for I can't recollect any passage of my life that I'm ashamed of.

Old Mir. Come hither, my dear friend; dost see this picture? [*Shows him a miniature.*

Young Mir. Oriana's!—Psha!

Old Mir. What, sir, won't you look upon't?—Bob, dear Bob, prithee come hither now.—Dost want any money, child?

Young Mir. No, sir.

Old Mir. Why then here's some for thee; come here now.—How canst thou be so hard-hearted, an unnatural, unmannerly rascal (don't mistake me, child, I an't angry) as to abuse this tender, lovely, good-natured, dear rogue? Why, she sighs for thee, and cries for thee, pouts for thee, and snubs for thee, the poor little heart of it is like to burst. Come, my dear boy, be good-natured like your nown father, be now.—And then see here, read this—the effigies of the lovely Oriana, with ten thousand pound to her portion—ten thousand pound, you dog! ten thousand pound, you rogue! How dare you refuse a lady with ten thousand pound, you impudent rascal?

Young Mir. Will you hear me speak, sir?

Old Mir. Hear you speak, sir! if you had ten thousand tongues, you could not outtalk ten thousand pound, sir.

Young Mir. Nay, sir, if you won't hear me I'll begone, sir! I'll take post for Italy this moment.

Old Mir. Ah! the fellow knows I won't part with him. Well, sir, what have you to say?

Young Mir. The universal reception, sir, that marriage has had in the world, is enough to fix it for a public good, and to draw everybody into the common cause; but there are some constitutions, like some instruments, so peculiarly singular, that they make tolerable music by themselves, but never do well in a consort.

Old Mir. Why this is reason, I must confess, but yet 'tis nonsense too; for though you should reason like an angel, if you argue yourself out of a good estate you talk like a fool.

Young Mir. But, sir, if you bribe me into bondage with the riches of Crœsus, you leave me but a beggar for want of my liberty.

Old Mir. Was ever such a perverse fool heard! 'Sdeath, sir, why did I give you education? was it to dispute me out of my senses? Of what colour now is the head of this cane? You'll say 'tis white, and, ten to one, make me believe it too. I thought that young fellows studied to get money.

Young Mir. No, sir, I have studied to despise it: my reading was not to make me rich, but happy, sir.

Old Mir. There he has me again now. But, sir, did not I marry to oblige you?

Young Mir. To oblige me, sir! in what respect, pray?

Old Mir. Why, to bring you into the world, sir; wa'n't that an obligation?

Young Mir. And because I would have it still an obligation, I avoid marriage.

Old Mir. How is that, sir?

Young Mir. Because I would not curse the hour I was born.

Old Mir. Look'ee, friend, you may persuade me out of my designs, but I'll command you out of yours; and though you may convince my reason that you're in the right, yet there is an old attendant of sixty-three, called positiveness, which you nor all the wits in Italy shall ever be able to shake; so, sir, you're a wit, and I'm a father; you may talk, but I'll be obeyed.

Young Mir. [*Aside.*] This it is to have the son a finer gentleman than the father; they first give us breeding that they don't understand, then they turn us out of doors 'cause we are wiser than themselves. But I'm a little aforehand with the old gentleman.—[*Aloud.*] Sir, you have been pleased to settle a thousand pound sterling a year upon me; in return of which, I have a very great honour for you and your family, and shall take care that your only and beloved son shall do nothing to make him hate his father, or to hang himself. So, dear sir, I'm your very humble servant. [*Runs off.*

Old Mir. Here, sirrah! rogue! Bob! villain!

Enter DUGARD.

Dug. Ay, sir, 'tis but what he deserves.

Old Mir. 'Tis false, sir, he don't deserve it: what have you to say against my boy, sir?

Dug. I shall only repeat your own words.

Old Mir. What have you to do with my words? I have swallowed my words already; I have eaten them up, and how can you come at 'em, sir?

Dug. Very easily, sir: 'tis but mentioning your injured ward, and you will throw them up again immediately.

Old Mir. Sir, your sister was a foolish young flirt to trust any such young, deceitful, rakehelly rogue, like him.

Dug. Cry you mercy, old gentleman! I thought we should have the words again.

Old Mir. And what then? 'Tis the way with young fellows to slight old gentlemen's words, you never mind 'em when you ought.—I say, that Bob's an honest fellow, and who dares deny it?

Enter BISARRE.

Bis. That dare I, sir:—I say, that your son is a wild, foppish, whimsical, impertinent coxcomb; and were I abused as this gentleman's sister, I

would make it an Italian quarrel, and poison the whole family.

Dug. Come, sir, 'tis no time for trifling, my sister is abused; you are made sensible of the affront, and your honour is concerned to see her redressed.

Old Mir. Look'ee, Mr. Dugard, good words go farthest. I will do your sister justice, but it must be after my own rate, nobody must abuse my son but myself. For although Robin be a sad dog, yet he's nobody's puppy but my own.

Bis. Ay, that's my sweet-natured, kind old gentleman.—[*Wheedling him.*] We will be good then, if you'll join with us in the plot.

Old Mir. Ah, you coaxing young baggage, what plot can you have to wheedle a fellow of sixty-three?

Bis. A plot that sixty-three is only good for, to bring other people together, sir; and you must act the Spaniard, 'cause your son will least suspect you; and if he should, your authority protects you from a quarrel, to which Oriana is unwilling to expose her brother.

Old Mir. And what part will you act in the business, madam?

Bis. Myself, sir; my friend is grown a perfect changeling: these foolish hearts of ours spoil our heads presently; the fellows no sooner turn knaves but we turn fools. But I am still myself, and he may expect the most severe usage from me, 'cause I neither love him nor hate him. [*Exit.*

Old Mir. Well said, Mrs. Paradox.—But, sir, who must open the matter to him?

Dug. Petit, sir, who is our engineer general. And here he comes.

Enter PETIT.

Pet. O sir, more discoveries! Are all friends about us?

Dug. Ay, ay, speak freely.

Pet. You must know, sir—ods my life, I'm out of breath!—you must know, sir—you must know—

Old Mir. What the devil must we know, sir?

Pet. That I have—[*Pants and blows.*] bribed, sir, bribed—your son's secretary of state.

Old Mir. Secretary of state! who's that, for Heaven's sake?

Pet. His valet-de-chambre, sir. You must know, sir, that the intrigue lay folded up with his master's clothes, and when he went to dust the embroidered suit, the secret flew out of the right pocket of his coat, in a whole swarm of your crambo songs, short-footed odes, and long-legged pindarics.

Old Mir. Impossible!

Pet. Ah, sir, he has loved her all along; there was Oriana in every line, but he hates marriage. Now, sir, this plot will stir up his jealousy, and we shall know by the strength of that how to proceed farther. Come, sir, let's about it with speed.

'Tis expedition gives our king the sway;
For expedition too the French give way;
Swift to attack, or swift to run away. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The same.*

Enter YOUNG MIRABEL *and* BISARRE, *passing carelessly by one another.*

Bis. I wonder what she can see in this fellow to like him?

Young Mir. I wonder what my friend can see in this girl to admire her?

Bis. A wild, foppish, extravagant rakehell.

Young Mir. A light, whimsical, impertinent madcap.

Bis. Whom do you mean, sir?

Young Mir. Whom do you mean, madam?

Bis. A fellow that has nothing left to re-establish him for a human creature, but a prudent resolution to hang himself.

Young Mir. There is a way, madam, to force me to that resolution.

Bis. I'll do't with all my heart.

Young Mir. Then you must marry me.

Bis. Look'ee, sir, don't think your ill manners to me shall excuse your ill usage of my friend; nor by fixing a quarrel here, to divert my zeal for the absent: for I'm resolved, nay I come prepared, to make you a panegyric that shall mortify your pride like any modern dedication.

Young Mir. And I, madam, like a true modern patron, shall hardly give you thanks for your trouble.

Bis. Come, sir, to let you see what little foundation you have for your dear sufficiency, I'll take you to pieces.

Young Mir. And what piece will you choose?

Bis. Your heart, to be sure; 'cause I should get presently rid on't; your courage I would give to a Hector, your wit to a lewd playmaker, your honour to an attorney, your body to the physicians, and your soul to its master.

Young Mir. I had the oddest dream last night of the duchess of Burgundy! methought the furbelows of her gown were pinned up so high behind, that I could not see her head for her tail.

Bis. The creature don't mind me!—[*Here* MIRABEL *pulls out a book and reads to himself while she speaks.*] Do you think, sir, that your humorous impertinence can divert me? No, sir, I'm above any pleasure that you can give, but that of seeing you miserable. And mark me, sir; my friend, my injured friend, shall yet be doubly happy, and you shall be a husband as much as the rites of marriage, and the breach of 'em, can make you.

Young Mir. [Reading.]
At regina dolos, quis fallere possit amantem?—
Dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum—
Very true!—
Posse nefas?—
By your favour, friend Virgil, 'twas but a rascally trick of your hero to forsake poor Pug so inhumanly.

Bis. I don't know what to say to him.—The devil—what's Virgil to us, sir?

Young Mir. Very much, madam, the most apropos in the world—for, what should I chop upon, but the very place where the perjured rogue of a lover and the forsaken lady are battling it tooth and nail. Come, madam, spend your spirits no longer, we'll take an easier method: I'll be Æneas now, and you shall be Dido, and we'll rail by book. Now for you, madam Dido.
Nec te noster amor, nec te data dextera quondam,
Nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido—
Ah, poor Dido! [*Looking at her.*

Bis. Rudeness! affronts! impatience! I could almost start out even to manhood, and want but a weapon as long as his to fight him upon the spot. What shall I say?

Young Mir. Now she rants,—
Quæ quibus anteferam? Jam jam nec maxima Juno—

Bis. A man! no, the woman's birth was spirited away.

Young Mir. Right, right, madam, the very words!

Bis. And some pernicious elf left in the cradle
With human shape to palliate growing mischief.

[*Both speak together and raise their voices by degrees.*

Young Mir. *Perfide, sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens*
Caucasus, Hyrcanæque admorunt ubera tigres.

Bis. Go, sir, fly to your midnight revels!

Young Mir. Excellent!
I, sequere Italiam ventis, pete regna per undas,
Spero equidem mediis, si quid pia numina possunt.

Bis. Converse with imps of darkness of your make, your nature starts at justice, and shivers at the touch of virtue!—Now the devil take his impudence, he vexes me so, I don't know whether to cry or laugh at him.

Young Mir. Bravely performed, my dear Libyan! I'll write the tragedy of Dido, and you shall act the part. But you do nothing at all, unless you fret yourself into a fit; for here the poor lady is stifled with vapours, drops into the arms of her maids, and the cruel, barbarous, deceitful wanderer, is in the very next line called *pius Æneas.*—There's authority for ye!

Sorry indeed Æneas stood
To see her in a pout;
But Jove himself, who ne'er thought good
To stay a second bout,
Commands him off, with all his crew,
And leaves poor Di, as I leave you. [*Runs off.*

Bis. Go thy ways, for a dear, mad, deceitful, agreeable fellow! O' my conscience I must excuse Oriana.
That lover soon his angry fair disarms,
Whose slighting pleases, and whose faults are charms. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The same.*

Enter PETIT, *he runs about knocking at every door.*

Pet. Mr. Mirabel, sir, where are you? nowhere to be found?

Enter Young MIRABEL.

Young Mir. What's the matter, Petit?

Pet. Most critically met.—Ah, sir, that one who has followed the game so long, and brought the poor hare just under his paws, should let a mongrel cur chop in, and run away with the puss!

Young Mir. If your worship can get out of your allegories, be pleased to tell me in three words what you mean.

Pet. Plain, plain, sir! Your mistress and mine is going to be married.

Young Mir. I believe you lie, sir.

Pet. Your humble servant, sir. [*Going.*

Young Mir. Come hither, Petit. Married! say you?

Pet. No, sir, 'tis no matter; I only thought to do you a service, but I shall take care how I confer my favours for the future.

Young Mir. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons. [*Bowing low.*

Pet. 'Tis enough, sir.—I come to tell you, sir, that Oriana is this moment to be sacrificed; married past redemption.

Young Mir. I understand her, she'll take a husband out of spite to me, and then out of love to me she will make him a cuckold; 'tis ordinary with women to marry one person for the sake of another, and to throw themselves into the arms of one they hate, to secure their pleasure with the man they love. But who is the happy man?

Pet. A lord, sir.

Young Mir. I'm her ladyship's most humble servant; a train and a title, hey!—Room for my lady's coach! A front row in the box for her ladyship! Lights, lights for her honour!—Now must I be a constant attender at my lord's levee, to work my way to my lady's couchee.—A countess, I presume, sir?

Pet. A Spanish count, sir, that Mr. Dugard knew abroad is come to Paris, saw your mistress yesterday, marries her to-day, and whips her into Spain to-morrow.

Young Mir. Ay, is it so? and must I follow my cuckold over the Pyrenees? Had she married within the precincts of a billet-doux, I would be the man to lead her to church; but as it happens, I'll forbid the bans. Where is this mighty Don?

Pet. Have a care, sir, he's a rough cross-grained piece, and there's no tampering with him; would you apply to Mr. Dugard, or the lady herself, something might be done, for it is in despite to you, that the business is carried so hastily. Odso, sir, here he comes. I must be gone. [*Exit.*

Enter Old MIRABEL, *dressed in a Spanish habit, leading* ORIANA.

Ori. Good my lord, a nobler choice had better suited your lordship's merit. My person, rank, and circumstance, expose me as the public theme of raillery, and subject me to so injurious usage, my lord, that I can lay no claim to any part of your regard, except your pity.

Old Mir. Breathes he vital air, that dares presume
With rude behaviour to profane such excellence?
Show me the man—
And you shall see how sudden my revenge
Shall fall upon the head of such presumption.
Is this thing one? [*Strutting up to* Young MIRABEL.

Young Mir. Sir!

Ori. Good my lord.

Old Mir. If he, or any he—

Ori. Pray, my lord, the gentleman's a stranger.

Old Mir. Oh, your pardon, sir!—but if you had—remember, sir—the lady now is mine, her injuries are mine; therefore, sir, you understand me.—Come, madam.

[*Leads* ORIANA *to the door, she goes off;* Young MIRABEL *runs to his father, and pulls him by the sleeve.*

Young Mir. *Ecoute, monsieur le comte.*

Old Mir. Your business, sir?

Young Mir. Boh!

Old Mir. Boh! what language is that, sir?

Young Mir. Spanish, my lord.

Old Mir. What d'ye mean?

Young Mir. This, sir. [*Trips up his heels.*

Old Mir. A very concise quarrel, truly.—I'll bully him. Trinidado, Seigneur, give me fair play. [*Offering to rise.*

Young Mir. By all means, sir.—[*Takes away his sword.*] Now, seigneur, where's that bombast look, and fustian face your countship wore just now. [*Strikes him.*

Old Mir. The rogue quarrels well, very well, my own son right!—But hold, sirrah, no more jesting; I'm your father, sir, your father.

Young Mir. [*Aside.*] My father! then by this light I could find in my heart to pay thee.—[*Aloud.*] Is the fellow mad? Why sure, sir, I han't frighted you out of your senses?

Old Mir. But you have, sir.

Young Mir. Then I'll beat them into you again. [*Offers to strike him.*

Old Mir. Why rogue—Bob, dear Bob, don't you know me, child?

Young Mir. Ha! ha! ha! the fellow's downright distracted, thou miracle of impudence, wouldst thou make me believe that such a grave gentleman as my father would go a-masquerading thus? that a person of threescore and three would run about in a fool's coat to disgrace himself and family! Why, you impudent villain, do you think I will suffer such an affront to pass upon my honoured father, my worthy father, my dear father? 'Sdeath, sir, mention my father but once again, and I'll send your soul to my grandfather this minute. [*Offering to stab him.*

Old Mir. Well, well, I am not your father.

Young Mir. Why then, sir, you are the saucy, hectoring Spaniard, and I'll use you accordingly.

Old Mir. The devil take the Spaniards, sir; we have all got nothing but blows since we began to take their part.

Enter DUGARD, ORIANA, PETIT, *and* Maid.

Dug. Fy, fy, Mirabel! murder your father! [*Holding him.*

Young Mir. My father! what, is the whole family mad? Give me way, sir, I won't be held.

Old Mir. No, nor I neither; let me be gone, pray. [*Offering to go.*

Young Mir. My father!

Old Mir. Ay, you dog's face, I am your father, for I have bore as much for thee as your mother ever did.

Young Mir. O ho! then this was a trick, it seems, a design, a contrivance, a stratagem.—Oh! how my bones ache!

Old Mir. Your bones, sirrah, why yours?

Young Mir. Why, sir, han't I been beating my own flesh and blood all this while?—[*To* ORIANA.] O madam, I wish your ladyship joy of your new dignity! Here was a contrivance, indeed.

Pet. The contrivance was well enough, sir, for they imposed upon us all.

Young Mir. Well, my dear Dulcinea, did your Don Quixote battle for you bravely? My father will answer for the force of my love.

Ori. Pray, sir, don't insult the misfortunes of your own creating.

Dug. [*Aside.*] My prudence will be counted cowardice, if I stand tamely now.—[*Comes up between* Young MIRABEL *and* ORIANA.] Well, sir!

Young Mir. Well, sir! Do you take me for one of your tenants, sir, that you put on your landlord-face at me?

Dug. On what presumption, sir, dare you assume thus? [*Draws.*

Old Mir. What's that to you, sir? [*Draws.*

Pet. Help, help, the lady faints!

[ORIANA *falls into her* Maid's *arms.*

Young Mir. Vapours! vapours! she'll come to herself. If it be an angry fit, a dram of assafœtida: if jealousy, hartshorn in water: if the mother, burnt feathers: if grief, ratafia: if it be strait stays, or corns, there's nothing like a dram of plain brandy. [*Exit.*

Ori. Hold off, give me air!—O my brother, would you preserve my life, endanger not your own; would you defend my reputation, leave it to itself; 'tis a dear vindication that's purchased by the sword; for though our champion prove victorious, yet our honour is wounded.

Old Mir. Ay, and your lover may be wounded, that's another thing. But I think you're pretty brisk again, my child.

Ori. Ay, sir, my indisposition was only a pretence to divert the quarrel; the capricious taste of your sex excuses this artifice in ours.

For often, when our chief perfections fail,
Our chief defects with foolish men prevail.
[*Exit.*

Pet. Come, Mr. Dugard, take courage, there is a way still left to fetch him again.

Old Mir. Sir, I'll have no plot that has any relation to Spain.

Dug. I scorn all artifice whatsoever; my sword shall do her justice.

Pet. Pretty justice, truly! Suppose you run him through the body; you run her through the heart at the same time.

Old Mir. And me through the head.—Rot your sword, sir, we'll have plots!—Come, Petit, let's hear.

Pet. What if she pretended to go into a nunnery, and so bring him about to declare himself?

Dug. That, I must confess, has a face.

Old Mir. Face! a face like an angel, sir. Ads my life, sir, 'tis the most beautiful plot in Christendom! We'll about it immediately. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A Street.*

Captain DURETETE *and* Young MIRABEL *discovered.*

Dur. And though I can't dance, nor sing, nor talk like you, yet I can fight, you know, sir.

Young Mir. I know thou canst, man.

Dur. 'Sdeath, sir, and I will! Let me see the proudest man alive make a jest of me!

Young Mir. But I'll engage to make you amends.

Dur. Danced to death! baited like a bear!—ridiculed! threatened to be kicked!—confusion! Sir, you set me on, and I will have satisfaction, all mankind will point at me.

Mir. [*Aside.*] I must give this thunderbolt some passage, or 'twill break upon my own head.—

Enter two Gentlemen.

[*Aloud.*] Look'ee, Duretete, what do these gentlemen laugh at?

Dur. At me, to be sure.—Sir, what made you laugh at me?

1 *Gent.* You're mistaken, sir, if we were merry we had a private reason.

2 *Gent.* Sir, we don't know you.

Dur. Sir, I'll make you know me; mark and observe me, I won't be named, it shan't be mentioned, not even whispered in your prayers at church. 'Sdeath sir, d'ye smile?

1 *Gent.* Not I, upon my word.

Dur. Why then look grave as an owl in a barn, or a friar with his crown a-shaving.

Young Mir. [*Aside to the* Gentlemen.] Don't be bullied out of your humour, gentlemen; the fellow's mad, laugh at him, and I'll stand by you.

1 *Gent.* Egad, and so we will. [*Aside to* MIRABEL.

Both. Ha! ha! ha!

Dur. Ha! ha! ha! very pretty.—[*Draws.*] She threatened to kick me. Ay, then, you dogs, I'll murder ye.

[*Fights, and beats them off,* MIRABEL *runs over to his side.*

Young Mir. Ha! ha! ha! bravely done, Duretete! there you had him, noble captain! hey, they run! they run! *Victoria! Victoria!*—Ha! ha! ha! how happy am I in an excellent friend! Tell me of your virtuosos and men of sense, a parcel of sour-faced splenetic rogues.—A man of my thin constitution should never want a fool in his company: I don't affect your fine things that improve the understanding, but hearty laughing to fatten my carcass: and o' my conscience, a man of sense is as melancholy without a coxcomb, as a lion without his jackal; he hunts for our diversion, starts game for our spleen, and perfectly feeds us with pleasure.

I hate the man who makes acquaintance nice,
And still discreetly plagues me with advice;
Who moves by caution, and mature delays,
And must give reasons for whate'er he says.
The man, indeed, whose converse is so full,
Makes me attentive, but it makes me dull:
Give me the careless rogue who never thinks,
That plays the fool as freely as he drinks.
Not a buffoon, who is buffoon by trade,
But one that nature, not his wants have made.
Who still is merry, but does ne'er design it:
And still is ridiculed, but ne'er can find it.
Who when he's most in earnest, is the best;
And his most grave expression is the jest. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Old MIRABEL'S *House.*

Old MIRABEL *and* DUGARD *discovered.*

Dug. The lady abbess is my relation, and privy to the plot. Your son has been there, but had no admittance beyond the privilege of the grate, and there my sister refused to see him. He went off more nettled at his repulse than I thought his gaiety could admit.

Old Mir. Ay, ay, this nunnery will bring him about, I warrant ye.

Enter Captain DURETETE.

Dur. Here, where are ye all?—O Mr. Mirabel, you have done fine things for your posterity!—And you, Mr. Dugard, may come to answer this.—I come to demand my friend at your hands; restore him, sir, or— [*To* Old MIRABEL.

Old Mir. Restore him! why d'ye think I have got him in my trunk, or my pocket?

Dur. Sir, he's mad, and you're the cause on't.

Old Mir. That may be; for I was as mad as he when I begat him.

Dug. Mad, sir! what d'ye mean?

Dur. What do you mean, sir, by shutting up your sister yonder, to talk like a parrot through a cage, or a decoy-duck, to draw others into the snare?—Your son, sir, because she has deserted him, he has forsaken the world; and in three words, has—

Old Mir. Hanged himself!

Dur. The very same; turned friar.

Old Mir. You lie, sir! 'tis ten times worse. Bob turned friar!—Why should the fellow shave his foolish crown when the same razor may cut his throat?

Dur. If you have any command, or you any interest over him, lose not a minute! He has thrown himself into the next monastery, and has ordered me to pay off his servants, and discharge his equipage.

Old Mir. Let me alone to ferret him out; I'll sacrifice the abbot if he receives him; I'll try whether the spiritual or the natural father has the most right to the child. But, dear captain, what has he done with his estate?

Dur. Settled it upon the church, sir.

Old Mir. The church! nay, then the devil won't get him out of their clutches.—Ten thousand livres a year upon the church! 'tis downright sacrilege.—Come, gentlemen, all hands to work; for half that sum, one of these monasteries shall protect you a traitor subject from the law, a rebellious wife from her husband, and a disobedient son from his own father. [*Exit.*

Dug. But will you persuade me that he's gone to a monastery?

Dur. Is your sister gone to the *Filles Repenties?* I tell you, sir, she's not fit for the society of repenting maids.

Dug. Why so, sir?

Dur. Because she's neither one nor t'other; she's too old to be a maid, and too young to repent.

[*Exit,* DUGARD *following him.*

SCENE II.—*The Interior of a Monastery.*

ORIANA *and* BISARRE *discovered; the former attired as a* Nun.

Ori. I hope, Bisarre, there is no harm in jesting with this religious habit.

Bis. To me, the greatest jest in the habit, is taking it in earnest: I don't understand this imprisoning people with the keys of Paradise, nor the merit of that virtue which comes by constraint.—Besides, we may own to one another, that we are in the worst company when among ourselves: for our private thoughts run us into those desires which our pride resists from the attacks of the world; and you may remember, the first woman then met the devil, when she retired from her man.

Ori. But I'm reconciled, methinks, to the mortification of a nunnery; because I fancy the habit becomes me.

Bis. A well-contrived mortification, truly, that

makes a woman look ten times handsomer than she did before!—Ah, my dear, were there any religion in becoming dress, our sex's devotion were rightly placed; for our toilets would do the work of the altar; we should all be canonised.

Ori. But don't you think there is a great deal of merit, in dedicating a beautiful face and person to the service of religion?

Bis. Not half so much as devoting 'em to a pretty fellow. If our feminality had no business in this world, why was it sent hither? Let us dedicate our beautiful minds to the service of Heaven. And for our handsome persons, they become a box at the play, as well as a pew in the church.

Ori. But the vicissitudes of fortune, the inconstancy of man, with other disappointments of life, require some place of religion, for a refuge from their persecution.

Bis. Ha! ha! ha! and do you think there is any devotion in a fellow's going to church, when he takes it only for a sanctuary? Don't you know, that religion consists in a charity with all mankind; and that you should never think of being friends with Heaven, till you have quarrelled with all the world? Come, come, mind your business; Mirabel loves you 'tis now plain, and hold him to't: give fresh orders that he shan't see you. We get more by hiding our faces sometimes than by exposing them; a very mask, you see, whets desire, but a pair of keen eyes through an iron gate, fire double upon 'em, with view and disguise. But I must be gone upon my affairs, I have brought my captain about again.

Ori. But why will you trouble yourself with that coxcomb?

Bis. Because he is a coxcomb; had not I better have a lover like him, that I can make an ass, than a lover like yours, to make a fool of me.—[*Knocking below.*] A message from Mirabel, I'll lay my life.—[*Runs to the door.*] Come hither, run, thou charming nun, come hither.

Ori. What's the news? [*Runs to her.*

Bis. Don't you see who's below?

Ori. I see nobody but a friar.

Bis. Ah! thou poor blind Cupid! O' my conscience, these hearts of ours spoil our heads instantly; the fellows no sooner turn knaves, than we turn fools. A friar! don't you see a villanous genteel mien under that cloak of hypocrisy, the loose careless air of a tall rakehelly fellow?

Ori. As I live, Mirabel turned friar! I hope, in Heaven, he's not in earnest.

Bis. In earnest! ha! ha! ha! are you in earnest? Now's your time; this disguise has he certainly taken for a passport, to get in and try your resolutions; stick to your habit to be sure; treat him with disdain, rather than anger; for pride becomes us more than passion. Remember what I say, if you would yield to advantage, and hold out the attack; to draw him on, keep him off to be sure.

The cunning gamesters never gain too fast,
But lose at first, to win the more at last. [*Exit.*

Ori. His coming puts me into some ambiguity, I don't know how; I don't fear him, but I mistrust myself. Would he were not come; yet I would not have him gone neither; I'm afraid to talk with him, but I love to see him though.

What a strange power has this fantastic fire,
That makes us dread even what we most desire!

Enter YOUNG MIRABEL *habited as a Friar.*

Young Mir. Save you, sister!—Your brother, young lady, having a regard to your soul's health, has sent me to prepare you for that sacred habit by confession.

Ori. [*Aside.*] That's false; the cloven foot already.—[*Aloud.*] My brother's care I own; and to you, sacred sir, I confess, that the great crying sin which I have long indulged, and now prepare to expiate, was love. My morning thoughts, my evening prayers, my daily musings, nightly cares, was love! My present peace, my future bliss, the joys of earth, and hopes of heaven, I all contemned for love!

Young Mir. [*Aside.*] She's downright stark mad in earnest; death and confusion, I have lost her!—[*Aloud.*] You confess your fault, madam, in such moving terms, that I could almost be in love with the sin.

Ori. Take care, sir; crimes, like virtues, are their own rewards; my chief delight became my only grief; he in whose breast I thought my heart secure turned robber, and despoiled the treasure that he kept.

Young Mir. Perhaps that treasure he esteems so much, that like a miser, though afraid to use it, he reserves it safe.

Ori. No, holy father: who can be miser in another's wealth that's prodigal of his own? His heart was open, shared to all he knew, and what, alas! must then become of mine? But the same eyes that drew the passion in, shall send it out in tears, to which now hear my vow.—

Young Mir. [*Discovering himself.*] No, my fair angel, but let me repent; here on his knees behold the criminal, that vows repentance his.—[*Aside.*] Ha! no concern upon her!

Ori. This turn is odd, and the time has been, that such a sudden change would have surprised me into some confusion.

Young Mir. Restore that happy time, for I am now returned to myself; I want but pardon to deserve your favour, and here I'll fix till you relent, and give it.

Ori. Grovelling, sordid man! why would you act a thing to make you kneel, monarch in pleasure to be slave to your faults? Are all the conquests of your wandering sway, your wit, your humour, fortune, all reduced to the base cringing of a bended knee? Servile and poor! I—[*Aside*] love it.

Young Mir. I come not here to justify my fault but my submission, for though there be a meanness in this humble posture, 'tis nobler still to bend when justice calls, than to resist conviction.

Ori. No more! thy oft-repeated violated words reproach my weak belief, 'tis the severest calumny to hear thee speak; that humble posture which once could raise, now mortifies my pride. How canst thou hope for pardon from one that you affront by asking it?

Young Mir. [*Rises.*] In my own cause no more, but give me leave to intercede for you against the hard injunctions of that habit which for my fault you wear.

Ori. Surprising insolence! My greatest foe pretends to give me counsel; but I am too warm upon so cool a subject. My resolutions, sir, are fixed! but as our hearts were united with the ceremony of our eyes, so I shall spare some tears to the separation—[*Weeps.*] That's all; farewell!

Young Mir. And must I lose her?—no.—[*Runs and catches her.*] Since all my prayers are vain, I'll use the nobler argument of man, and force you to the justice you refuse; you're mine by pre-contract: and where's the vow so sacred to disannul another? I'll urge my love, your oath, and plead my cause 'gainst all monastic shifts upon the earth.

Ori. Unhand me, ravisher! would you profane these holy walls with violence? revenge for all my past disgrace now offers; thy life should answer this, would I provoke the law. Urge me no farther, but be gone.

Young Mir. Inexorable woman, let me kneel again. [*Kneels.*

Enter Old Mirabel.

Old Mir. Where, where's this counterfeit nun?

Ori. Madness! confusion! I'm ruined! [*Aside.*

Young Mir. What do I hear?—[*Puts on his hood.*] What did you say, sir?

Old Mir. I say she's a counterfeit, and you may be another for aught I know, sir; I have lost my child by these tricks, sir.

Young Mir. What tricks, sir?

Old Mir. By a pretended trick, sir. A contrivance to bring my son to reason, and it has made him stark mad; I have lost him, and a thousand pound a year.

Young Mir. [*Discovering himself.*] My dear father, I'm your most humble servant.

Old Mir. My dear boy! [*Runs and kisses him.*] Welcome, *ex inferis*, my dear boy! 'Tis all a trick, she's no more a nun than I am.

Young Mir. No?

Old Mir. The devil a bit.

Young Mir. Then kiss me again, my dear dad, for the most happy news.—And now most venerable holy sister. [*Kneels.*

Your mercy and your pardon I implore,
For the offence of asking it before.

Look'ee, my dear counterfeiting nun, take my advice, be a nun in good earnest; women make the best nuns always when they can't do otherwise.—Ah, my dear father, there is a merit in your son's behaviour that you little think; the free deportment of such fellows as I, makes more ladies religious, than all the pulpits in France.

Ori. O sir, how unhappily have you destroyed what was so near perfection! He is the counterfeit that has deceived you.

Old Mir. Ha! Look'ee, sir, I recant, she is a nun.

Young Mir. Sir, your humble servant, then I'm a friar this moment.

Old Mir. Was ever an old fool so bantered by a brace o' young ones! Hang you both, you're both counterfeits, and my plot's spoiled, that's all. [*Exit.*

Ori. Shame and confusion! love, anger, and disappointment, will work my brain to madness. [*Throws off her habit, and exit.*

Young Mir. Ay, ay, throw by the rags, they have served a turn for us both, and they shall e'en go off together. [*Takes off his habit.*

Thus the sick wretch, when tortured by his pain,
And finding all essays for life are vain;
When the physician can no more design,
Then calls the other doctor the divine.
What vows to Heaven, would Heaven restore his health!
Vows all to Heaven, his thoughts, his actions, wealth:
But if restored to vigour, as before,
His health refuses what his sickness swore.
The body is no sooner raised and well,
But the weak soul relapses into ill;
To all its former swing of life is led,
And leaves its vows and promises in bed.

[*Exit, throwing away the habit.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* Old Mirabel's *House.*

Enter Captain Duretete *with a Letter.*

Dur. [Reads.] *My rudeness was only a proof of your humour, which I have found so agreeable, that I own myself penitent, and willing to make any reparation upon your first appearance to* 'Bisarre.

Mirabel swears she loves me, and this confirms it; then farewell gallantry, and welcome revenge: 'tis my turn now to be upon the sublime, I'll take her off, I warrant her.

Enter Bisarre.

Well, mistress, do you love me?

Bis. I hope, sir, you will pardon the modesty of—

Dur. Of what? of a dancing devil!—Do you love me, I say?

Bis. Perhaps I—

Dur. What?

Bis. Perhaps I do not.

Dur. Ha! abused again!—Death, woman, I'll—

Bis. Hold, hold, sir; I do, I do!

Dur. Confirm it then by your obedience. Stand there; and ogle me now, as if your heart, blood, and soul, were like to fly out at your eyes.—First, the direct surprise—[*She looks full upon him.*] Right; next the *doux yeux par oblique*—[*She gives him the side glance.*] Right; now depart, and languish.—[*She turns from him, and looks over her shoulder.*] Very well; now sigh.—[*She sighs.*] Now drop your fan o' purpose.—[*She drops her fan.*]—Now take it up again.—Come now, confess your faults; are not you a proud—say after me.

Bis. Proud—

Dur. Impertinent—

Bis. Impertinent—

Dur. Ridiculous—

Bis. Ridiculous—

Dur. Flirt?

Bis. Puppy?

Dur. Zoons, woman! don't provoke me, we are alone, and you don't know but the devil may tempt me to do you a mischief; ask my pardon immediately.

Bis. I do, sir, I only mistook the word.

Dur. Cry then; ha' you got e'er a handkerchief?

Bis. Yes, sir.

Dur. Cry then, handsomely; cry like a queen in a tragedy.

[*She, pretending to cry, bursts out a-laughing.*

Enter two Ladies *laughing.*

Bis. Ha! ha! ha!

Ladies. Ha! ha! ha!

Dur. Hell broke loose upon me, and all the furies fluttered about my ears! Betrayed again!

Bis. That you are, upon my word, my dear captain; ha! ha! ha!

Dur. The Lord deliver me!

1 *Lady.* What! is this the mighty man with the bull-face that comes to frighten ladies? I long to see him angry; come, begin.

Dur. Ah, madam, I'm the best natured fellow in the world.

2 *Lady.* A man! we're mistaken, a man has manners; the awkward creature is some tinker's trull in a periwig.

Bis. Come, ladies, let's examine him.

[*They lay hold on him.*

Dur. Examine! the devil you will!

Bis. I'll lay my life, some great dairy-maid in man's clothes.

Dur. They will do't.—Look ye, dear christian women, pray hear me.

Bis. Will you ever attempt a lady's honour again?

Dur. If you please to let me get away with my honour, I'd do anything in the world.

Bis. Will you persuade your friend to marry mine?

Dur. O yes, to be sure.

Bis. And will you do the same by me?

Dur. Burn me if I do, if the coast be clear!

[*Runs out.*

Bis. Ha! ha! ha! this visit, ladies, was critical for our diversion; we'll go make an end of our tea.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Another Room in the same.*

Enter Young Mirabel, Old Mirabel *following.*

Young Mir. Your patience, sir. I tell you I won't marry; and though you send all the bishops in France to persuade me, I shall never believe their doctrine against their practice.

Old Mir. But will you disobey your father, sir?

Young Mir. Would my father have his youthful son lie lazing here, bound to a wife, chained like a monkey to make sport to a woman, subject to her whims, humours, longings, vapours, and caprices; to have her one day pleased, to-morrow peevish, the next day mad, the fourth rebellious; and nothing but this succession of impertinence for ages together? Be merciful, sir, to your own flesh and blood.

Old Mir. But sir, did not I bear all this, why should not you?

Young Mir. Then you think that marriage, like treason, should attaint the whole blood? Pray consider, sir, is it reasonable because you throw yourself down from one story, that I must cast myself headlong from the garret window? You would compel me to that state, which I have heard you curse yourself, when my mother and you have battled it for a whole week together.

Old Mir. Never but once, you rogue! and that was when she longed for six Flanders mares. Ay, sir, then she was breeding of you, which showed what an expensive dog I should have of you.

Enter Petit.

Well, Petit, how does she now?

Pet. Mad, sir, *con pompos.*—Ah, Mr. Mirabel, you'll believe that I speak truth now, when I confess that I have told you hitherto nothing but lies; our jesting is come to a sad earnest, she's downright distracted.

Enter Bisarre.

Bis. Where is this mighty victor?—The great exploit is done; go triumph in the glory of your conquest, inhuman, barbarous man!—[*To* Old Mirabel.] O sir, your wretched ward has found a tender guardian of you! Where her young innocence expected protection, here has she found her ruin.

Old Mir. Ay, the fault is mine, for I believe that rogue won't marry, for fear of begetting such a disobedient son as his father did. I have done all I can, madam, and now can do no more than run mad for company. [*Cries.*

Enter Dugard, *with his sword drawn.*

Dug. Away! Revenge! revenge!

Old Mir. [*Holding* Dugard.] Patience, patience, sir!—[*Aside to* Young Mirabel.] Bob, draw.

Dug. Patience! the coward's virtue, and the brave man's failing, when thus provoked.—Villain!

Young Mir. Your sister's frenzy shall excuse your madness; and show my concern for what she suffers; I'll bear the villain from her brother. Put up your anger with your sword; I have a heart like yours, that swells at an affront received, but melts at an injury given; and if the lovely Oriana's grief be such a moving scene, 'twill find a part within this breast, perhaps as tender as a brother's.

Dug. To prove that soft compassion for her grief, endeavour to remove it.

Enter Oriana *as mad, held by two* Maids, *who put her in a chair.*

There, there, behold an object that's infective! I cannot view her, but I am as mad as she. A sister that my dying parents left, with their last words and blessing, to my care.—Sister, dearest sister.

[*Goes to* Oriana.

Old Mir. Ay, poor child, poor child, d'ye know me?

Ori. You! you are Amadis de Gaul, sir.—Oh! oh my heart!—Were you never in love, fair lady? and do you never dream of flowers and gardens?—I dream of walking fires, and tall gigantic sighs. Take heed, it comes now.—What's that?—Pray stand away: I have seen that face sure.—How light my head is!

Young Mir. What piercing charms has beauty,
even in madness!
These sudden starts of undigested words
Shoot through my soul with more persuasive force
Than all the studied art of labour'd eloquence.—
Come, madam, try to repose a little.

Ori. I cannot; for I must be up to go to church, and I must dress me, put on my new gown, and be so fine, to meet my love.—Heigh-ho!—Will not you tell me where my heart lies buried?

Young Mir. My very soul is touched!—Your hand, my fair.

Ori. How soft and gentle you feel!—I'll tell you your fortune, friend.

Young Mir. How she stares upon me!

Ori. You have a flattering face; but 'tis a fine one.—I warrant you have five hundred mistresses. —Ay, to be sure, a mistress for every guinea in his pocket.—Will you pray for me? I shall die tomorrow.—And will you ring my passing-bell?

Young Mir. O woman, woman, of artifice created!
Whose nature, even distracted, has a cunning:
In vain let man his sense, his learning boast,
When woman's madness overrules his reason.—
Do you know me, injured creature?

Ori. No; but you shall be my intimate acquaintance in the grave. [*Weeps.*

Young Mir. O tears, I must believe ye!
Sure there's a kind of sympathy in madness;
For even I, obdurate as I am,
Do feel my soul so toss'd with storms of passion,
That I could cry for help as well as she. [*Wipes his eyes.*

Ori. What, have you lost your lover?—No, you mock me; I'll go home and pray.

Young Mir. Stay, my fair innocence! and hear me own
My love so loud,
That I may call your senses to their place,
Restore 'em to their charming happy functions,
And reinstate myself into your favour.

Bis. Let her alone, sir, 'tis all too late.—She trembles; hold her; her fits grow stronger by her talking.—Don't trouble her; she don't know you, sir.

Old Mir. Not know him! what then? she loves to see him for all that.

Enter Captain DURETETE.

Dur. Where are you all?—What the devil! melancholy, and I here! Are ye sad, and such a ridiculous subject, such a very good jest among ye, as I am?

Young Mir. Away with this impertinence! this is no place for bagatelle. I have murdered my honour, destroyed a lady, and my desire of reparation is come at length too late. See there!

Dur. What ails her?

Young Mir. Alas! she's mad.

Dur. Mad! dost wonder at that? By this light, they're all so; they're cozening mad, they're brawling mad, they're proud mad; I just now came from a whole world of mad women, that had almost—what, is she dead?

Young Mir. Dead! Heavens forbid.

Dur. Heavens further it; for till they be cold as a key, there's no trusting them. You're never sure that a woman's in earnest till she be nailed in her coffin. Shall I talk to her?—Are you mad, mistress?

Bis. What's that to you, sir?

Dur. Oons, madam! are you there? [*Runs off.*

Young Mir. Away, thou wild buffoon!
How poor and mean this humour now appears!
His follies and my own I here disclaim;
This lady's frenzy has restored my senses,
And was she perfect now, as once she was,
(Before you all I speak it,) she should be mine;
And as she is, my tears and prayers shall wed her.

Dug. How happy had this declaration been some hours ago!

Bis. Sir, she beckons to you, and waves us to go off; come, come, let's leave 'em.

[*Exit with* Old MIRABEL, DUGARD, PETIT, *and* Maids.

Ori. Oh, sir!

Young Mir. Speak, my charming angel, if your dear senses have regained their order; speak, fair, and bless me with the news!

Ori. First, let me bless the cunning of my sex, that happy counterfeited frenzy, that has restored to my poor labouring breast the dearest, best-beloved of men!

Young Mir. Tune all ye spheres your instruments of joy,
And carry round your spacious orbs
The happy sound of Oriana's health;
Her soul, whose harmony was next to yours,
Is now in tune again:
The counterfeiting fair has play'd the fool.
She was so mad to counterfeit for me;
I was so mad to pawn my liberty:
But now we both are well, and both are free.

Ori. How, sir! free!

Young Mir. As air, my dear bedlamite. What, marry a lunatic! Look, my dear, you have counterfeited madness so very well this bout, that you'll be apt to play the fool all your life long.—Here, gentlemen! [*Calls.*

Ori. Monster, you won't disgrace me?

Young Mir. O'my faith, but I will!—Here, come in, gentlemen.

Re-enter Old MIRABEL *and* DUGARD.

A miracle! a miracle! the woman's dispossessed, the devil's vanished.

Old Mir. Bless us, was she possessed?

Young Mir. With the worst of demons, sir,—a marriage-devil, a horrid devil!—Mr. Dugard, don't be surprised; I promised my endeavours to cure your sister. No mad-doctor in Christendom could have done it more effectually. Take her into your charge, and have a care she don't relapse. If she should, employ me not again; for I am no more infallible than others of the faculty; I do cure sometimes.

Ori. Your remedy, most barbarous man, will prove the greatest poison to my health; for though my former frenzy was but counterfeit, I now shall run into a real madness. [*Exit,* Old MIRABEL *after her.*

Dug. This was a turn beyond my knowledge; I'm so confused, I know not how to resent it. [*Exit.*

Young Mir. What a dangerous precipice have I 'scaped! was not I just now upon the brink of destruction?

Re-enter Captain DURETETE.

O my friend, let me run into thy bosom! no lark escaped from the devouring pounces of a hawk, quakes with more dismal apprehensions!

Dur. The matter, man?

Young Mir. Marriage! hanging!—I was just at the gallows-foot, the running noose about my neck, and the cart wheeling from me! Oh, I shan't be myself this month again!

Dur. Did not I tell you so? They are all alike, saints or devils; their counterfeiting can't be reputed a deceit: for 'tis the nature of the sex, not their contrivance.

Young Mir. Ay, ay; there's no living here with security: this house is so full of stratagem and design, that I must abroad again.

Dur. With all my heart, I'll bear thee company,

my lad. I'll meet you at the play; and we'll set out for Italy to-morrow morning.

Young Mir. A match: I'll go pay my compliment of leave to my father presently.

Dur. I'm afraid he'll stop you.

Young Mir. What, pretend a command over me, after his settlement of a thousand pound a year upon me! No, no, he has passed away his authority with the conveyance; the will of a living father is chiefly obeyed for sake of the dying one.

What makes the world attend and crowd the great?
Hopes, interest, and dependence, make their state.
Behold the antechamber fill'd with beaux,
A horse's levee throng'd with courtly crows.
Though grumbling subjects make the crown their sport,
Hopes of a place will bring the sparks to court.
Dependence, even a father's sway secures,
For though the son rebels, the heir is yours.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Street before the Theatre.*

Enter Young Mirabel *and* Captain Duretete *as from the play.*

Dur. How d'ye like this play?

Young Mir. I liked the company; the lady, the rich beauty in the front-box, had my attention. These impudent poets bring the ladies together to support them, and to kill everybody else.

For death's upon the stage, the ladies cry,
But ne'er mind us that in the audience die:
The poet's hero should not move their pain,
But they should weep for those their eyes have slain.

Dur. Hoity, toity! did Phillis inspire you with all this?

Young Mir. Ten times more! the playhouse is the element of poetry, because the region of beauty. The ladies, methinks, have a more inspiring triumphant air in the boxes than anywhere else; they sit commanding on their thrones with all their subject-slaves about them. Their best clothes, best looks, shining jewels, sparkling eyes, the treasure of the world in a ring. Then there's such a hurry of pleasure to transport us; the bustle, noise, gallantry, equipage, garters, feathers, wigs, bows, smiles, ogles, love, music, and applause. I could wish that my whole life-long were the first night of a new play!

Dur. The fellow has quite forgot this journey!—Have you bespoke post-horses?

Young Mir. Grant me but three days, dear captain: one to discover the lady, one to unfold myself, and one to make me happy; and then I'm yours to the world's end.

Dur. Hast thou the impudence to promise thyself a lady of her figure and quality in so short a time?

Young Mir. Yes, sir; I have a confident address, no disagreeable person, and five hundred louis-d'ors in my pocket.

Dur. Five hundred louis-d'ors! you an't mad!

Young Mir. I tell you, she's worth five thousand; one of her black brilliant eyes is worth a diamond as big as her head. I compared her necklace with her looks, and the living jewels outsparkled the dead ones by a million.

Dur. But you have owned to me, that abating Oriana's pretensions to marriage, you loved her passionately, then how can you wander at this rate?

Young Mir. I longed for a partridge t'other day off the king's plate, but dy'e think, because I could not have it, I must eat nothing?

Dur. Prithee, Mirabel, be quiet. You may remember what narrow 'scapes you have had abroad by following strangers: you forget your leap out of the courtesan's window at Bologna to save your fine ring there.

Young Mir. My ring's a trifle; there's nothing we possess comparable to what we desire. Be shy of a lady barefaced in the front box with a thousand pound in jewels about her neck! for shame, no more!

Enter Oriana, *dressed as a* Page, *with a letter.*

Ori. Is your name Mirabel, sir?

Young Mir. Yes, sir.

Ori. A letter from your uncle in Picardy.

[*Gives the letter.*

Young Mir. [Reads.] *The bearer is the son of a Protestant gentleman, who flying for his religion, left me the charge of this youth.*—A pretty boy!—*He's fond of some handsome service that may afford him opportunity of improvement, your care of him will oblige—Yours*—Hast a mind to travel, child?

Ori. 'Tis my desire, sir; I should be pleased to serve a traveller in any capacity.

Young Mir. A hopeful inclination! You shall along with me into Italy, as my page.

Dur. I don't think it safe; the rogue's too handsome.—[*Noise without.*] The play's done, and some of the ladies come this way.

Enter Lamorce, *her train borne up by a* Page.

Young Mir. Duretete, the very dear, identical she!

Dur. And what then?

Young Mir. Why 'tis she.

Dur. And what then, sir?

Young Mir. Then! why—[*To* Oriana.] Look'ee, sirrah, the first piece of service I put you upon, is to follow that lady's coach, and bring me word where she lives.

Ori. I don't know the town, sir, and am afraid of losing myself.

Young Mir. Psha!

Lam. Page, what's become of all my people?

Page. I can't tell, madam, I can see no sign of your ladyship's coach.

Lam. That fellow is got into his old pranks, and fallen drunk somewhere: none of the footmen there?

Page. Not one, madam.

Lam. These servants are the plague of our lives, what shall I do?

Young Mir. By all my hopes, Fortune pimps for me!—Now Duretete, for a piece of gallantry.

Dur. Why you won't, sure?

Young Mir. Won't, brute!—[*To* LAMORCE.] Let not your servants' neglect, madam, put your ladyship to any inconvenience, for you can't be disappointed of an equipage whilst mine waits below, and would you honour the master so far, he would be proud to pay his attendance.

Dur. Ay, to be sure. [*Aside.*

Lam. Sir, I won't presume to be troublesome, for my habitation is a great way off.

Dur. Very true, madam, and he's a little engaged; besides, madam, a hackney-coach will do as well, madam.

Young Mir. [*To* Captain DURETETE.] Rude beast, be quiet!—[*To* LAMORCE.] The farther from home, madam, the more occasion you have for guard—Pray, madam—

Lam. Lard, sir!—

[*He seems to press, she to decline it, in dumb show.*

Dur. Ah! the devil's in his impudence! Now he wheedles, she smiles; he flatters, she simpers; he swears, she believes; he's a rogue, and she's a whore in a moment.

Young Mir. Without there, my coach!—Duretete, wish me joy.

[*Hands* LAMORCE *out, Page following.*

Dur. Wish you a surgeon!—Here, you little Picard, go follow your master, and he'll lead you—

Ori. Whither, sir?

Dur. To the academy, child; 'tis the fashion with men of quality to teach their pages their exercises—go.

Ori. Won't you go with him too, sir? that woman may do him some harm; I don't like her.

Dur. Why, how now, Tages, do you start up to give laws of a sudden? do you pretend to rise at court, and disapprove the pleasures of your betters? Look'ee, sirrah, if ever you would rise by a great man, be sure to be with him in his little actions; and, as a step to your advancement, follow your master immediately, and make it your hope that he go to a bawdy-house.

Ori. Heavens forbid! [*Exit.*

Dur. Now would I sooner take a cart in company of the hangman, than a coach with that woman. What a strange antipathy have I taken against these creatures! A woman to me is aversion upon aversion, cheese, a cat, a breast of mutton, the squealing of children, the grinding of knives, and the snuff of a candle. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—LAMORCE'S *Lodgings.*

Enter Young MIRABEL *and* LAMORCE.

Lam. To convince me, sir, that your service was something more than good breeding, please to lay out an hour of your company upon my desire, as you have already upon my necessity.

Young Mir. Your desire, madam, has only prevented my request.—My hours! make 'em yours, madam, eleven, twelve, one, two, three, and all that belong to those happy minutes.

Lam. But I must trouble you, sir, to dismiss your retinue, because an equipage at my door, at this time of night, will not be consistent with my reputation.

Young Mir. By all means, madam, all but one little boy.—Here, Page—

Enter ORIANA.

Order my coach and servants home, and do you stay.—[*Exit* ORIANA.] 'Tis a foolish country boy, that knows nothing but innocence.

Lam. Innocence, sir! I should be sorry if you made any sinister constructions of my freedom.

Young Mir. O madam, I must not pretend to remark upon anybody's freedom, having so entirely forfeited my own.

Lam. Well, sir, 'twere convenient towards our easy correspondence, that we entered into a free confidence of each other, by a mutual declaration of what we are, and what we think of one another. Now, sir, what are you?

Young Mir. In three words, madam, I am a gentleman, I have five hundred pound in my pocket, and a clean shirt on.

Lam. And your name is—

Young Mir. Mustapha.—Now, madam, the inventory of your fortunes.

Lam. My name is Lamorce; my birth noble; I was married young, to a proud, rude, sullen, imperious fellow; the husband spoiled the gentleman; crying ruined my face, till at last I took heart, leaped out of a window, got away to my friends, sued my tyrant, and recovered my fortune. I lived from fifteen to twenty to please a husband, from twenty to forty I'm resolved to please myself, and from thence upwards I'll humour the world.

Young Mir. The charming wild notes of a bird broke out of its cage!

Lam. I marked you at the play, and something I saw of a well-furnished, careless, agreeable tour about you. Methought your eyes made their mannerly demands with such an arch modesty, that I don't know how—but I'm eloped, ha! ha! ha! I'm eloped.

Young Mir. Ha! ha! ha! I rejoice in your good fortune with all my heart.

Lam. Oh, now I think on't, Mr. Mustapha, you have got the finest ring there! I could scarcely believe it right; pray let me see it.

Young Mir. Hum!—Yes, madam, 'tis, 'tis right.—But—but—but—it was given me by my mother;—an old family-ring, madam,—an old-fashioned family-ring.

Lam. Ay, sir!—If you can entertain yourself with a song for a moment I'll wait on you.—Come in there.

Enter Singers.

Call what you please, sir. [*Exit.*

Young Mir. The new song—*Prithee, Phillis, &c.*

SONG.

Since, Celia, 'tis not in our power
  To tell how long our lives may last,
Begin to love this very hour,
  You've lost too much in what is past.

For since the power we all obey,
  Has in your breast my heart confined,
Let me my body to it lay,
  In vain you'd part what nature join'd.

[*Exeunt Singers.*

Young Mir. Certainly the stars have been in a strange intriguing humour when I was born!—Ay, this night should I have had a bride in my arms; and that I should like well enough. But what should I have to-morrow night? the same. And what next night? the same. And what next night?

the very same. Soup for breakfast, soup for dinner, soup for supper, and soup for breakfast again. But here's variety.

I love the fair who freely gives her heart
That's mine by ties of nature not of art;
Who boldly owns whate'er her thoughts indite,
And is too modest for a hypocrite.

She comes, she comes!—[LAMORCE *appears at the door, as he runs towards her, four* Bravoes *step in before her. He starts back.*] Hum! hum!—[*Aside.*] Bitch!—murdered, murdered to be sure! The cursed strumpet! to make me send away my servants!—Nobody near me!—These cut-throats make always sure work.—What shall I do? I have but one way.—[*Aloud.*] Are these gentlemen your relations, madam?

Lam. Yes, sir.

Young Mir. Gentlemen, your most humble servant!—Sir, your most faithful!—Yours, sir, with all my heart!—Your most obedient!—[*Salutes all round.*] Come, gentlemen, please to sit.—No ceremony—next the lady—pray, sir. [*They all sit.*

Lam. Well, sir, and how d'ye like my friends?

Young Mir. O madam, the most finished gentlemen! I was never more happy in good company in my life.—I suppose, sir, you have travelled?

1 *Bra.* Yes, sir.

Young Mir. Which way, may I presume?

1 *Bra.* In a western barge, sir.

Young Mir. Ha! ha! ha! very pretty; facetious pretty gentleman!

Lam. Ha! ha! ha! Sir, you have got the prettiest ring upon your finger there—

Young Mir. Ah, madam! 'tis at your service with all my heart. [*Offering the ring.*

Lam. By no means, sir, a family-ring! [*Takes it.*

Young Mir. No matter, madam.—[*Aside.*] Seven hundred pound, by this light!

2 *Bra.* Pray, sir, what's o'clock?

Young Mir. Hum! Sir, I forgot my watch at home.

2 *Bra.* I thought I saw the string of it just now.

Young Mir. Ods my life, sir, I beg your pardon! Here it is—but it don't go. [*Putting it up.*

Lam. O dear sir, an English watch! Tompion's, I presume?

Young Mir. D'ye like it, madam? No ceremony.—[LAMORCE *takes the watch.*] 'Tis at your service with all my heart and soul.—[*Aside.*] Tompion's! hang ye.

1 *Bra.* But, sir, above all things, I admire the fashion and make of your sword-hilt.

Young Mir. I'm mighty glad you like it, sir.

1 *Bra.* Will you part with it, sir?

Young Mir. Sir, I won't sell it.

1 *Bra.* Not sell it, sir!

Young Mir. No, gentlemen—but I'll bestow it with all my heart. [*Offering it.*

1 *Bra.* O sir, we shall rob you!

Young Mir. [*Aside.*] That you do, I'll be sworn!—[*Aloud.*] I have another at home, pray, sir.—[*Gives his sword.*] Gentlemen, you're too modest; have I anything else that you fancy?—[*To* First Bravo.] Sir, will you do me a favour? I am extremely in love with that wig which you wear, will you do me the favour to change with me?

1 *Bra.* Look'ee, sir, this is a family-wig, and I would not part with it, but if you like it—

Young Mir. Sir, your most humble servant. [*They change wigs.*

1 *Bra.* Madam, your most humble slave. [*Goes up foppishly to* LAMORCE, *and salutes her.*

2 *Bra.* The fellow's very liberal, shall we murder him? [*Aside.*

1 *Bra.* [*Aside.*] What! let him 'scape to hang us all, and I to lose my wig! no, no. I want but a handsome pretence to quarrel with him, for you know we must act like gentlemen.—[*Aloud.*] Here, some wine!

Enter Servant *with wine.*

Sir, your good health. [*Pulls* Young MIRABEL *by the nose.*

Young Mir. O sir, your most humble servant! A pleasant frolic enough, to drink a man's health, and pull him by the nose; ha! ha! ha! the pleasantest pretty humoured gentleman!

Lam. Help the gentleman to a glass. [Young MIRABEL *drinks.*

1 *Bra.* How d'ye like the wine, sir?

Young Mir. Very good o' the kind, sir; but I'll tell ye what, I find we're all inclined to be frolicsome, and egad, for my own part, I was never more disposed to be merry; let's make a night on't, ha!—This wine is pretty, but I have such burgundy at home!—Look'ee, gentlemen, let me send for a dozen flasks of my burgundy, I defy France to match it.—'Twill make us all life, all air; pray, gentlemen.

2 *Bra.* Eh! shall us have his burgundy?

1 *Bra.* Yes, faith, we'll have all we can.—Here, call up the gentleman's servant.—[*Exit* Servant.] What think you, Lamorce?

Lam. Yes, yes.—Your servant is a foolish country boy, sir, he understands nothing but innocence?

Young Mir. Ay, ay, madam.—Here, page.—

Re-enter ORIANA.

Take this key, and go to my butler; order him to send half-a-dozen flasks of the red burgundy, marked a thousand, and be sure you make haste. I long to entertain my friends here, my very good friends.

All. Ah, dear sir!

1 *Bra.* Here, child, take a glass of wine.—Your master and I have changed wigs, honey, in a frolic.—Where had you this pretty boy, honest Mustapha?

Ori. Mustapha! [*Aside.*

Young Mir. Out of Picardy.—This is the first errand he has made for me, and if he does it right, I'll encourage him.

Ori. The red burgundy, sir?

Young Mir. The red, marked a thousand, and be sure you make haste.

Ori. I shall, sir. [*Exit.*

1 *Bra.* Sir, you were pleased to like my wig, have you any fancy for my coat? Look'ee, sir, it has served a great many honest gentlemen very faithfully.

Young Mir. Not so faithfully, for I'm afraid it has got a scurvy trick of leaving all its masters in necessity. The insolence of these dogs is beyond their cruelty. [*Aside.*

Lam. You're melancholy, sir!

Young Mir. Only concerned, madam, that I should have no servant here but this little boy.—He'll make some confounded blunder, I'll lay my life on't; I would not be disappointed of my wine for the universe.

Lam. He'll do well enough, sir; but supper's ready, will you please to eat a bit, sir?

Young Mir. O madam, I never had a better stomach in my life!

Lam. Come then; we have nothing but a plate of soup.

Young Mir. [*Aside.*] Ah! The marriage-soup I could dispense with now. [*Exit, handing* LAMORCE.

2 *Bra.* That wig won't fall to your share.

1 *Bra.* No, no, we'll settle that after supper; in the mean time the gentleman shall wear it.

2 *Bra.* Shall we despatch him?

3 *Bra.* To be sure: I think he knows me.

1 *Bra.* Ay, ay, dead men tell no tales. I wonder at the impudence of the English rogues, that will hazard the meeting a man at the bar that they have encountered upon the road! I han't the confidence to look a man in the face after I have done him an injury; therefore we'll murder him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* Old MIRABEL'S *House.*

Captain DURETETE *discovered alone.*

Dur. My friend has forsaken me, I have abandoned my mistress, my time lies heavy on my hands, and my money burns in my pocket.—But now I think on't, my myrmidons are upon duty to-night; I'll fairly stroll down to the guard, and nod away the night with my honest lieutenant, over a flask of wine, a rakehelly story, and a pipe of tobacco. [*Going off.*

Enter BISARRE, *meeting him.*

Bis. Who comes there? Stand!

Dur. Heyday, now she's turned dragoon!

Bis. Look'ee, sir, I'm told you intend to travel again.—I design to wait on you as far as Italy.

Dur. Then I'll travel into Wales.

Bis. Wales! what country's that?

Dur. The land of mountains, child, where you're never out of the way, 'cause there's no such thing as a high-road.

Bis. Rather always in a high road, 'cause you travel all upon hills.—But be't as it will, I'll jog along with you.

Dur. But we intend to sail to the East Indies.

Bis. East or west, 'tis all one to me; I'm tight and light, and the fitter for sailing.

Dur. But suppose we take through Germany, and drink hard?

Bis. Suppose I take through Germany, and drink harder than you?

Dur. Suppose I go to a bawdy-house?

Bis. Suppose I show you the way?

Dur. 'Sdeath, woman, will you go to the guard with me, and smoke a pipe?

Bis. Allons, donc!

Dur. The devil's in the woman!—Suppose I hang myself?

Bis. There I'll leave you.

Dur. And a happy riddance, the gallows is welcome. [*Going.*

Bis. Hold, hold, sir!—[*Catches him by the arm.*] One word before we part.

Dur. Let me go, madam, or I shall think that you're a man, and perhaps may examine you.

Bis. Stir if you dare; I have still spirits to attend me; and can raise such a muster of fairies as shall punish you to death.—Come, sir, stand there now and ogle me.—[*He frowns upon her.*] Now a languishing sigh!—[*He groans.*] Now run and take up my fan,—faster.—[*He runs and takes it up.*] Now play with it handsomely.

Dur. Ay, ay. [*He tears it all in pieces.*

Bis. Hold, hold, dear humorous coxcomb; captain, spare my fan, and I'll—why, you rude, inhuman monster, don't you expect to pay for this?

Dur. Yes, madam, there's twelvepence; for that's the price on't.

Bis. Sir, it cost a guinea.

Dur. Well, madam, you shall have the sticks again. [*Throws them to her, and exit.*

Bis. Ha! ha! ha! ridiculous below my concern. I must follow him, however, to know if he can give me any news of Oriana. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—LAMORCE'S *Lodgings.*

Young MIRABEL *discovered alone.*

Young Mir. Bloody hell-hounds, I overheard you!—Was not I two hours ago the happy, gay, rejoicing Mirabel? How did I plume my hopes in a fair coming prospect of a long scene of years! Life courted me with all the charms of vigour, youth, and fortune; and to be torn away from all my promised joys, is more than death; the manner too—by villains.—O my Oriana, this very moment might have blessed me in thy arms! and my poor boy, the innocent boy!—Confusion!—But hush, they come; I must dissemble.

Enter Bravoes.

Still no news of my wine, gentlemen?

1 *Bra.* No, sir, I believe your country booby has lost himself, and we can wait no longer for't.—True, sir, you're a pleasant gentleman, but I suppose you understand our business.

Young Mir. Sir, I may go near to guess at your employments; you, sir, are a lawyer, I presume, you a physician, you a scrivener, you a stock-jobber.—[*Aside.*] All cut-throats, egad!

4 *Bra.* Sir, I am a broken officer; I was cashiered at the head of the army for a coward: so I took up the trade of murder to retrieve the reputation of my courage.

3 *Bra.* I am a soldier too, and would serve my king, but I don't like the quarrel, and I have more honour than to fight in a bad cause.

2 *Bra.* I was bred a gentleman, and have no estate, but I must have my whore and my bottle, through the prejudice of education.

1 *Bra.* I am a ruffian too, by the prejudice of education, I was bred a butcher. In short, sir, if your wine had come, we might have trifled a little longer.—Come, sir, which sword will you fall by? mine, sir? [*Draws.*

2 *Bra.* Or mine? [*Draws.*

3 *Bra.* Or mine? [*Draws.*

4 *Bra.* Or mine? [*Draws.*

Young Mir. [*Aside.*] I scorn to beg my life; but to be butchered thus—[*Knocking.*] Oh, there's the wine!—This moment for my life or death.

Enter ORIANA.

Lost, for ever lost!—Where's the wine, child? [*Faintly.*

Ori. Coming up, sir. [*Stamps.*

Enter Captain DURETETE *with his sword drawn, and six* Soldiers, *with their pieces presented, the* Bravoes *drop their swords. Exit* ORIANA.

Young Mir. The wine! the wine! the wine! Youth, pleasure, fortune, days, and years, are now my own again.—Ah, my dear friends, did not I tell you this wine would make me merry?—Dear captain, these gentlemen are the best-natured, facetious, witty creatures, that ever you knew.

Enter LAMORCE.

Lam. Is the wine come, sir?

Young Mir. O yes, madam, the wine is come—see there!—[*Pointing to the* Soldiers.] Your ladyship has got a very fine ring upon your finger.

Lam. Sir, 'tis at your service.

Young Mir. O ho! is it so?—[*Puts it on his finger.*] Thou dear seven hundred pound, thou'rt welcome home again, with all my heart!—Ad's my life, madam, you have got the finest built watch there! Tompion's, I presume?

Lam. Sir, you may wear it.

Young Mir. O madam, by no means, 'tis too much!—Rob you of all!—[*Taking it from her.*] Good dear time, thou'rt a precious thing: I'm glad I have retrieved thee.—[*Putting it up.*] What, my friends neglected all this while! Gentlemen, you'll pardon my complaisance to the lady.—How now, is it so civil to be out of humour at my entertainment, and I so pleased with yours?—[*To* DURETETE.] Captain, you're surprised at all this! but we're in our frolics, you must know.—Some wine here!

Enter Servant *with wine.*

Come, captain, this worthy gentleman's health.—[*Tweaks* First Bravo *by the nose, he roars.*] But now, where, where's my dear deliverer, my boy, my charming boy?

1 Bra. I hope some of our crew below stairs have despatched him.

Young Mir. Villain, what sayest thou? despatched! I'll have ye all tortured, racked, torn to pieces alive, if you have touched my boy.—Here, page! page! page! [*Runs out.*

Dur. Here, gentlemen, be sure you secure those fellows.

1 Bra. Yes, sir, we know you and your guard will be very civil to us.

Dur. Now, for you madam.—He! he! he! I'm so pleased to think that I shall be revenged of one woman before I die.—Well, Mistress Snapdragon, which of these honourable gentlemen is so happy to call you wife?

1 Bra. Sir, she should have been mine to-night, 'cause Sampre here had her last night. Sir, she's very true to us all four.

Dur. Take 'em to justice.

[*Exeunt* Soldiers *with the* Bravoes.

Enter Old MIRABEL, DUGARD, *and* BISARRE.

Old Mir. Robin! Robin! where's Bob, where's my boy?—What, is this the lady?—A pretty whore, faith!—Heark'ee child, because my son was so civil as to oblige you with a coach, I'll treat you with a cart; indeed I will.

Dug. Ay, madam,—and you shall have a swinging equipage, three or four thousand footmen at your heels at least.

Dur. No less becomes her quality.

Bis. Faugh! the monster!

Dur. Monster! ay, you're all a little monstrous, let me tell you.

Re-enter Young MIRABEL.

Old Mir. Ah, my dear Bob, art thou safe, man?

Young Mir. No, no, sir, I'm ruined, the saver of my life is lost.

Old Mir. No, no, he came and brought us the news.

Young Mir. But where is he?

Re-enter ORIANA.

Ha!—[*Runs and embraces her.*] My dear preserver, what shall I do to recompense your trust?—Father, friend, gentlemen, behold the youth that has relieved me from the most ignominious death, from the scandalous poniards of these bloody ruffians, where to have fallen, would have defamed my memory with vile reproach.—My life, estate, my all, is due to such a favour. Command me, child: before you all, before my late, so kind indulgent stars, I swear, to grant whate'er you ask.

Ori. To the same stars indulgent now to me, I will appeal as to the justice of my claim; I shall demand but what was mine before—the just performance of your contract to Oriana. [*Discovering herself.*

All. Oriana!

Ori. In this disguise I resolved to follow you abroad, counterfeited that letter that got me into your service; and so, by this strange turn of fate, I became the instrument of your preservation. Few common servants would have had such cunning: my love inspired me with the meaning of your message, 'cause my concern for your safety made me suspect your company.

Dur. Mirabel, you're caught.

Young Mir. Caught! I scorn the thought of imposition, the tricks and artful cunning of the sex I have despised, and broke through all contrivance. Caught! no, 'tis my voluntary act; this was no human stratagem, but by my providential stars designed
To show the dangers, wandering youth incurs
By the pursuit of an unlawful love,
To plunge me headlong in the snares of vice,
And then to free me by the hands of virtue;
Here on my knees,
I humbly beg my fair preserver's pardon;
My thanks are needless, for myself I owe.
And now for ever do protest me yours.

Old Mir. [*Sings.*]—Tall, all, di dall!—[*To* ORIANA.] Kiss me, daughter.—[*To* LAMORCE.] No, you shall kiss me first; for you're the cause on't.—Well, Bisarre, what say you to the captain?

Bis. I like the beast well enough, but I don't understand his paces so well as to venture him in a strange road.

Old Mir. But marriage is so beaten a path that you can't go wrong.

Bis. Ay, 'tis so beaten that the way is spoiled.

Dur. There is but one thing should make me thy husband. I could marry thee to-day for the privilege of beating thee to-morrow.

Old Mir. Come, come, you may agree for all

this.—Mr. Dugard, are not you pleased with this?

Dug. So pleased, that if I thought it might secure your son's affection to my sister, I would double her fortune.

Young Mir. Fortune! has not she given me mine? my life, estate, my all, and what is more, her virtuous self?
Virtue, in this so advantageous light,
Has her own sparkling charms more tempting far
Than glittering gold or glory. Behold the foil
[*Pointing to* LAMORCE.
That sets this brightness off.—[*To* ORIANA.] Here view the pride [*To* ORIANA.
And scandal of the sex.—[*To* LAMORCE.] There the false meteor, [*To* LAMORCE.
Whose deluding light leads mankind to destruction.
Here—[*To* ORIANA,] the bright shining star that guides to a
Security of happiness. A garden
And a single she—[*To* ORIANA,] was our first father's bliss;
The tempter—[*To* LAMORCE,] and to wander was his curse.
What liberty can be so tempting there,
[*Pointing to* LAMORCE.
As a soft, virtuous, amorous bondage here.
[*To* ORIANA.

EPILOGUE,

BY NATHANIEL ROWE. SPOKEN BY MR. WILKS.

FROM Fletcher's great original, to-day
We took the hint of this our modern play:
Our author, from his lines, has strove to paint
A witty, wild, inconstant, free gallant,
With a gay soul, with sense, and will to rove,
With language, and with softness framed to move,
With little truth, but with a world of love.
Such forms on maids in morning slumbers wait,
When fancy first instructs their hearts to beat,
When first they wish, and sigh for what they know not yet.
Frown not, ye fair, to think your lovers may
Reach your cold hearts by some unguarded way;
Let Villeroy's misfortune make you wise,
There's danger still in darkness and surprise;
Though from his ramparts he defied the foe,
Prince Eugene found an aqueduct below.
With easy freedom, and a gay address,
A pressing lover seldom wants success:
Whilst the respectful, like the Greek, sits down,
And wastes a ten years' siege before one town.
For her own sake, let no forsaken maid,
Our wanderer, for want of love, upbraid;
Since 'tis a secret, none should e'er confess,
That they have lost the happy power to please.
If you suspect the rogue inclined to break,
Break first, and swear you've turn'd him off, a week;
As princes, when they resty statesmen doubt,
Before they can surrender, turn 'em out.
Whate'er you think, grave uses may be made,
And much even for inconstancy be said.
Let the good man, for marriage rites design'd,
With studious care, and diligence of mind,
Turn over every page of womankind;
Mark every sense, and how the readings vary,
And, when he knows the worst on't,—let him marry.

THE TWIN-RIVALS.

A Comedy.

Sic vos non vobis.—VIRGIL.

TO HENRY BRETT, ESQ.

THE commons of England have a right of petitioning; and since by your place in the senate you are obliged to hear and redress the subject, I presume upon the privilege of the people to give you the following trouble.

As prologues introduce plays on the stage, so dedications usher them into the great theatre of the world; and as we choose some stanch actor to address the audience, so we pitch upon some gentleman of undisputed ingenuity to recommend us to the reader. Books, like metals, require to be stamped with some valuable effigies before they become popular and current.

To escape the critics, I resolved to take sanctuary with one of the best; one who differs from the fraternity in this, that his good-nature is ever predominant, can discover an author's smallest fault, and pardon the greatest.

Your generous approbation, Sir, has done this play service, but has injured the author; for it has made him insufferably vain, and he thinks himself authorised to stand up for the merit of his performance, when so great a master of wit has declared in its favour.

The muses are the most coquettish of their sex, fond of being admired, and always putting on their best airs to the finest gentleman: but alas, Sir! their addresses are stale, and their fine things but repetition; for there is nothing new in wit, but what is found in your own conversation.

Could I write by the help of study, as you talk without it, I would venture to say something in the usual strain of dedication; but as you have too much wit to suffer it, and I too little to undertake it, I hope the world will excuse my deficiency, and you will pardon the presumption of, Sir, your most obliged, and most humble servant,

December 23, 1702. G. FARQUHAR.

THE PREFACE.

THE success and countenance that debauchery has met with in plays, was the most severe and reasonable charge against their authors in Mr. Collier's "Short View;" and indeed this gentleman had done the drama considerable service, had he arraigned the stage only to punish its misdemeanours, and not to take away its life; but there is an advantage to be made sometimes of the advice of an enemy, and the only way to disappoint his designs, is to improve upon his invective, and to make the stage flourish, by virtue of that satire by which he thought to suppress it.

I have therefore in this piece endeavoured to show, that an English comedy may answer the strictness of poetical justice; but indeed the greater share of the English audience, I mean that part which is no farther read than in plays of their own language, have imbibed other principles, and stand up as vigorously for the old poetic licence, as they do for the liberty of the subject. They take all innovations for grievances; and, let a project be never so well laid for their advantage, yet the undertaker is very likely to suffer by't. A play without a beau, cully, cuckold, or coquette, is as poor an entertainment to some palates, as their Sunday's dinner would be without beef and pudding. And this I take to be one reason that the galleries were so thin during the run of this play. I thought indeed to have soothed the splenetic zeal of the city, by making a gentleman a knave, and punishing their great grievance—a whoremaster; but a certain virtuoso of that fraternity has told me since, that the citizens were never more disappointed in any entertainment: "For," said he, "however pious we may appear to be at home, yet we never go to that end of the town but with an intention to be lewd."

There was an odium cast upon this play, before it appeared, by some persons who thought it their interest to have it suppressed. The ladies were frighted from seeing it by formidable stories of a midwife, and were told, no doubt, that they must expect no less than a labour upon the stage; but I hope the examining into that aspersion will be enough to wipe it off, since the character of the midwife is only so far touched as is necessary for carrying on the plot, she being principally deciphered in her procuring capacity; and I dare not affront the ladies so far as to imagine they could be offended at the exposing of a bawd.

Some critics complain, that the design is defective for want of Clelia's appearance in the scene; but I had rather they should find this fault, than I forfeit my regard to the fair, by showing a lady of figure under a misfortune; for which reason I made her only nominal, and chose to expose the person that injured her; and if the ladies don't agree that I have done her justice in the end, I'm very sorry for't.

Some people are apt to say, that the character of Richmore points at a particular person; though I must confess I see nothing but what is very general in his character, except his marrying his own mistress; which by the way, he never did, for he was no sooner off the stage but he changed his mind, and the poor lady is still *in statu quo*. But upon the

whole matter, 'tis application only makes the ass; and characters in plays are like Long-lane clothes, not hung out for the use of any particular people, but to be bought by only those they happen to fit.

The most material objection against this play is the importance of the subject, which necessarily leads into sentiments too grave for diversion, and supposes vices too great for comedy to punish. 'Tis said, I must own, that the business of comedy is chiefly to ridicule folly; and that the punishment of vice falls rather into the province of tragedy; but if there be a middle sort of wickedness, too high for the sock, and too low for the buskin, is there any reason that it should go unpunished? What are more obnoxious to human society, than the villanies exposed in this play, the frauds, plots and contrivances upon the fortunes of men, and the virtue of women? But the persons are too mean for the heroic; then what must we do with them? Why, they must of necessity drop into comedy; for it is unreasonable to imagine that the lawgivers in poetry would tie themselves up from executing that justice which is the foundation of their constitution; or to say, that exposing vice is the business of the drama, and yet make rules to screen it from persecution.

Some have asked the question, why the Elder Wouldbe, in the fourth act, should counterfeit madness in his confinement? Don't mistake, there was no such thing in his head; and the judicious could easily perceive, that it was only a start of humour put on to divert his melancholy; and when gaiety is strained to cover misfortune, it may very naturally be overdone, and rise to a semblance of madness, sufficient to impose on the constable, and perhaps on some of the audience; who taking everything at sight, impute that as a fault, which I am bold to stand up for, as one of the most masterly strokes of the whole piece.

This I think sufficient to obviate what objections I have heard made; but there was no great occasion for making this defence, having had the opinion of some of the greatest persons in England, both for quality and parts, that the play has merit enough to hide more faults than have been found; and I think their approbation sufficient to excuse some pride that may be incident to the author upon this performance.

I must own myself obliged to Mr. Longueville for some lines in the part of Teague, and something of the lawyer; but above all, for his hint of the twins, upon which I formed my plot. But having paid him all due satisfaction and acknowledgment, I must do myself the justice to believe, that few of our modern writers have been less beholden to foreign assistance in their plays, than I have been in the following scenes.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HERMES WOULDBE, *elder Son and heir to* LORD WOULDBE.
BENJAMIN WOULDBE, *his Brother.*
RICHMORE, *a gay dissipated Rake.*
CAPTAIN TRUEMAN, *his Nephew, and friend to* HERMES WOULDBE.
SUBTLEMAN, *an Attorney.*
FAIRBANK, *a Goldsmith.*
BALDERDASH, *a Vintner.*
CLEARACCOUNT, *Steward to* LORD WOULDBE.
COMIC, *a Poet.*

JACK, FRISURE, } *Valets to* BENJAMIN WOULDBE.
TEAGUE, *Valet to* HERMES WOULDBE.

CONSTANCE, *betrothed to* HERMES WOULDBE.
AURELIA, *her Cousin, beloved by* CAPTAIN TRUEMAN.
MRS. CLEARACCOUNT, *Wife to* CLEARACCOUNT.
MRS. MANDRAKE, *a Midwife and Procuress.*

Alderman, Constables, Gentlemen, Mob, Maid, *and* Footmen.

SCENE,—LONDON.

PROLOGUE,

BY MR. MOTTEUX. SPOKEN BY MR. WILKS.

An Alarm sounded.

WITH drums and trumpets in this warring age,
A martial prologue should alarm the stage.
New plays, ere acted, a full audience near,
Seem towns invested, when a siege they fear.
Prologues are like a forlorn hope, sent out
Before the play, to skirmish and to scout:
Our dreadful foes, the critics, when they spy,
They cock, they charge, they fire, then—back they fly.
The siege is laid,—there gallant chiefs abound,
Here foes intrench'd, there glittering troops around,
And the loud batteries roar—from yonder rising ground.
In the first act brisk sallies (miss or hit),
With volleys of small shot, or snip-snap wit,
Attack, and gall the trenches of the pit.
The next the fire continues, but at length
Grows less, and slackens like a bridegroom's strength.
The third, feints, mines, and countermines abound,
Your critic engineers safe underground,
Blow up our works, and all our art confound.
The fourth brings on most action, and 'tis sharp,
Fresh foes crowd on, at your remissness carp,
And desperate, though unskill'd, insult our counterscarp.
Then comes the last; the general storm is near,
The poet-governor now quakes for fear;
Runs wildly up and down, forgets to huff,
And would give all he has plunder'd—to get off.
So, Don and Monsieur, bluff before the siege,
Were quickly tamed—at Venloo, and at Liege:
'Twas *Viva Spagnia! Vive France!* before;
Now, *Quartier! Monsieur! Quartier! Ah, Señor!*
But what your resolution can withstand?
You master all, and awe the sea and land.
In war your valour makes the strong submit;
Your judgment humbles all attempts in wit.
What play, what fort, what beauty can endure,
All fierce assaults, and always be secure!
Then grant 'em generous terms who dare to write,
Since now that seems as desperate as to fight:
If we must yield, yet ere the day be fixt,
Let us hold out the third, and, if we may, the sixth.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Benjamin Wouldbe's *Lodgings.*

Benjamin Wouldbe *discovered dressing,* Jack *buckling his shoes.*

Ben. Would. Here is such a plague every morning, with buckling shoes, gartering, combing and powdering!—Psha! cease thy impertinence, I'll dress no more to-day.—[*Exit* Jack.] Were I an honest brute, that rises from his litter, shakes himself, and so is dressed, I could bear it.

Enter Richmore.

Rich. No farther yet, Wouldbe! 'tis almost one.

Ben. Would. Then blame the clockmakers, they made it so; the sun has neither fore nor afternoon. Prithee, what have we to do with time? Can't we let it alone as nature made it? Can't a man eat when he's hungry, go to bed when he's sleepy, rise when he wakes, dress when he pleases, without the confinement of hours to enslave him?

Rich. Pardon me, sir, I understand your stoicism—you have lost your money last night.

Ben. Would. No, no, Fortune took care of me there—I had none to lose.

Rich. 'Tis that gives you the spleen.

Ben. Would. Yes, I have got the spleen; and something else.—Hark'ee— [*Whispers.*

Rich. How!

Ben. Would. Positively. The lady's kind reception was the most severe usage I ever met with. Shan't I break her windows, Richmore?

Rich. A mighty revenge truly! Let me tell you, friend, that breaking the windows of such houses are no more than writing over a vintner's door, as they do in Holland, *Vin te koop.* 'Tis no more than a bush to a tavern, a decoy to trade, and to draw in customers; but upon the whole matter, I think, a gentleman should put up an affront got in such little company; for the pleasure, the pain, and the resentment, are all alike scandalous.

Ben. Would. Have you forgot, Richmore, how I found you one morning with the Flying-Post in your hand, hunting for physical advertisements?

Rich. That was in the days of dad, my friend, in the days of dirty linen, pit-masks, hedge-taverns, and beefsteaks; but now I fly at nobler game; the Ring, the Court, Pawlet's, and the Park: I despise all women that I apprehend any danger from, less than the having my throat cut: and should scruple to converse even with a lady of fortune, unless her virtue were loud enough to give me pride in exposing it.—Here's a letter I received this morning; you may read it. [*Gives a letter.*

Ben. Would. [Reads.] *If there be solemnity in protestation, justice in heaven, or fidelity on earth, I may still depend on the faith of my Richmore. Though I may conceal my love, I no longer can hide the effects on't from the world. Be careful of my honour, remember your vows, and fly to the relief of the disconsolate* Clelia.
The fair, the courted, blooming Clelia!

Rich. The credulous, troublesome, foolish Clelia. Did you ever read such a fulsome harangue? *Lard, sir, I am near my time, and want your assistance!* Does the silly creature imagine that any man would come near her in those circumstances, unless it were doctor Chamberlain?—You may keep the letter.

Ben. Would. But why would you trust it with me? you know I can't keep a secret that has any scandal in't.

Rich. For that reason I communicate: I know thou art a perfect gazette, and will spread the news all over the town: for you must understand that I am now besieging another; and I would have the fame of my conquest upon the wing, that the town may surrender the sooner.

Ben. Would. But if the report of your cruelty goes along with that of your valour, you'll find no garrison of any strength will open their gates to you.

Rich. No, no, women are cowards, and terror prevails upon them more than clemency: my best pretence to my success with the fair is my using 'em ill. 'Tis turning their own guns upon 'em, and I have always found it the most successful battery to assail one reputation by sacrificing another.

Ben. Would. I could love thee for thy mischief, did I not envy thee for thy success in't.

Rich. You never attempt a woman of figure.

Ben. Would. How can I? this confounded hump of mine is such a burden at my back, that it presses me down here in the dirt and diseases of Covent-garden, the low suburbs of pleasure. Curst fortune! I am a younger brother, and yet cruelly deprived of my birthright of a handsome person; seven thousand a year in a direct line, would have straightened my back to some purpose. But I look, in my present circumstances, like a branch of another kind, grafted only upon the stock which makes me grow so crooked.

Rich. Come, come, 'tis no misfortune, your father is so as well as you.

Ben. Would. Then why should not I be a lord as well as he? Had I the same title to the deformity I could bear it.

Rich. But how does my lord bear the absence of your twin-brother?

Ben. Would. My twin-brother! Ay, 'twas his crowding me that spoiled my shape, and his coming half an hour before me that ruined my fortune. My father expelled me his house some two years ago, because I would have persuaded him that my twin-brother was a bastard. He gave me my portion, which was about fifteen hundred pound, and I have spent two thousand of it already. As for my brother, he don't care a farthing for me.

Rich. Why so, pray?

Ben. Would. A very odd reason—because I hate him.

Rich. How should he know that?

Ben. Would. Because he thinks it reasonable it should be so.

Rich. But did your actions ever express any malice to him?

Ben. Would. Yes: I would fain have kept him company; but being aware of my kindness, he went abroad. He has travelled these five years, and I

am told, is a grave sober fellow, and in danger of living a great while; all my hope is, that when he gets into his honour and estate, the nobility will soon kill him by drinking him up to his dignity. But come, Frank, I have but two eyesores in the world, a brother before me and a hump behind me, and thou art still laying 'em in my way: let us assume an argument of less severity. Canst thou lend me a brace of hundred pounds?

Rich. What would you do with 'em?

Ben. Would. Do with 'em! there's a question indeed! Do you think I would eat 'em?

Rich. Yes, o' my troth, would you, and drink 'em together. Look'ee, Mr. Wouldbe, whilst you kept well with your father, I could have ventured to have lent you five guineas: but as the case stands, I can assure you, I have lately paid off my sister's fortunes, and—

Ben. Would. Sir, this put-off looks like an affront, when you know I don't use to take such things.

Rich. Sir, your demand is rather an affront, when you know I don't use to give such things.

Ben. Would. Sir, I'll pawn my honour.

Rich. That's mortgaged already for more than it is worth; you had better pawn your sword there, 'twill bring you forty shillings.

Ben. Would. 'Sdeath, sir.—

[*Takes his sword off the table.*

Rich. Hold, Mr. Wouldbe! suppose I put an end to your misfortunes all at once?

Ben. Would. How, sir?

Rich. Why go to a magistrate, and swear you would have robbed me of two hundred pounds. Look'ee, sir, you have been often told, that your extravagance would some time or other be the ruin of you; and it will go a great way in your indictment, to have turned the pad upon your friend.

Ben. Would. This usage is the height of ingratitude from you, in whose company I have spent my fortune.

Rich. I'm therefore a witness, that it was very ill spent. Why would you keep company, be at equal expenses with me, that have fifty times your estate? What was gallantry in me, was prodigality in you; mine was my health, because I could pay for't; yours a disease, because you could not.

Ben. Would. And is this all I must expect from our friendship?

Rich. Friendship! sir, there can be no such thing without an equality.

Ben. Would. That is, there can be no such thing when there is occasion for't.

Rich. Right, sir; our friendship was over a bottle only; and whilst you can pay your club of friendship, I'm that way your humble servant; but when once you come borrowing, I'm this way—your humble servant. [*Exit.*

Ben. Would. Rich, big, proud, arrogant villain! I have been twice his second, thrice sick of the same love, and thrice cured by the same physic, and now he drops me for a trifle. That an honest fellow in his cups should be such a rogue when he's sober! The narrow-hearted rascal has been drinking coffee this morning. Well, thou dear, solitary half-crown, adieu!—Here, Jack!

Re-enter JACK.

Take this; pay for a bottle of wine, and bid Balderdash bring it himself.—[*Exit* JACK.] How melancholy are my poor breeches; not one chink!—Thou art a villanous hand, for thou hast picked my pocket.—This vintner now has all the marks of an honest fellow, a broad face, a copious look, a strutting belly, and a jolly mien. I have brought him above three pound a night for these two years successively. The rogue has money, I'm sure, if he will but lend it.

Enter BALDERDASH *with a bottle and glass*, JACK *attending*.

Oh, Mr. Balderdash, good morrow.

Bald. Noble Mr. Wouldbe, I'm your most humble servant. I have brought you a whetting-glass, the best old hock in Europe; I know 'tis your drink in a morning.

Ben. Would. I'll pledge you, Mr. Balderdash.

Bald. Your health, sir. [*Drinks.*

Ben. Would. Pray, Mr. Balderdash, tell me one thing—but first sit down: now tell me plainly what you think of me?

Bald. Think of you, sir! I think that you are the honestest, noblest gentleman, that ever drank a glass of wine; and the best customer that ever came into my house.

Ben. Would. And you really think as you speak?

Bald. May this wine be my poison, sir, if I don't speak from the bottom of my heart!

Ben. Would. And how much money do you think I have spent in your house?

Bald. Why truly, sir, by a moderate computation, I do believe that I have handled of your money the best part of five hundred pounds within these two years.

Ben. Would. Very well! And do you think that you lie under any obligation for the trade I have promoted to your advantage?

Bald. Yes, sir; and if I can serve you in any respect, pray command me to the utmost of my ability.

Ben. Would. Well, thanks to my stars, there is still some honesty in wine!—Mr. Balderdash, I embrace you and your kindness: I am at present a little low in cash, and must beg you to lend me a hundred pieces.

Bald. Why, truly, Mr. Wouldbe, I was afraid it would come to this. I have had it in my head several times to caution you upon your expenses: but you were so very genteel in my house, and your liberality became you so very well, that I was unwilling to say anything that might check your disposition; but truly, sir, I can forbear no longer to tell you, that you have been a little too extravagant.

Ben. Would. But since you reaped the benefit of my extravagance, you will, I hope, consider my necessity.

Bald. Consider your necessity! I do with all my heart, and must tell you, moreover, that I will be no longer accessary to it: I desire you, sir, to frequent my house no more.

Ben. Would. How, sir!

Bald. I say, sir, that I have an honour for my good lord your father, and will not suffer his son to run into any inconvenience. Sir, I shall order my drawers not to serve you with a drop of wine. Would you have me connive at a gentleman's destruction?

Ben. Would. But methinks, sir, that a person

of your nice conscience should have cautioned me before.

Bald. Alas! sir, it was none of my business. Would you have me be saucy to a gentleman that was my best customer? Lackaday, sir, had you money to hold it out still, I had been hanged rather than be rude to you. But truly, sir, when a man is ruined, 'tis but the duty of a Christian to tell him of it.

Ben. Would. Will you lend me the money, sir?

Bald. Will you pay me this bill, sir?

Ben. Would. Lend me the hundred pound, and I will pay the bill.

Bald. Pay me the bill, and I will not lend the hundred pound, sir. But pray consider with yourself now, sir, would not you think me an arrant coxcomb, to trust a person with money that has always been so extravagant under my eye? whose profuseness I have seen, I have felt, I have handled? Have not I known you, sir, throw away ten pound of a night upon a covey of pit-partridges, and a setting-dog? Sir, you have made my house an ill house: my very chairs will bear you no longer. In short, sir, I desire you to frequent the Crown no more, sir.

Ben. Would. Thou sophisticated tun of iniquity, have I fattened your carcass, and swelled your bags with my vital blood? Have I made you my companion to be thus saucy to me? But now I will keep you at your due distance. [*Kicks him.*

Jack. Welcome, sir!

Ben. Would. Well said, Jack. [*Kicks him again.*

Jack. Very welcome, sir! I hope we shall have your company another time. Welcome, sir!

[BALDERDASH *is kicked off.*

Ben. Would. Pray wait on him down stairs, and give him a welcome at the door too.—[*Exit* JACK.] This is the punishment of hell; the very devil that tempted me to the sin, now upbraids me with the crime—I have villanously murdered my fortune; and now its ghost, in the lank shape of poverty, haunts me: is there no charm to conjure down the fiend?

Re-enter JACK.

Jack. O sir, here's sad news!

Ben. Would. Then keep it to thyself, I have enough of that already.

Jack. Sir, you will hear it too soon.

Ben. Would. What! is Broad below?

Jack. No, no, sir; better twenty such as he were hanged. Sir, your father's dead.

Ben. Would. My father! — Good night, my lord!—Has he left me anything?

Jack. I heard nothing of that, sir.

Ben. Would. Then I believe you heard all there was of it.—Let me see.—My father dead! and my elder brother abroad!—If necessity be the mother of invention, she was never more pregnant than with me.—[*Pauses.*] Here, sirrah, run to Mrs. Mandrake, and bid her come hither presently.—[*Exit* JACK.] That woman was my mother's midwife when I was born, and has been my bawd these ten years. I have had her endeavours to corrupt my brother's mistress; and now her assistance will be necessary to cheat him of his estate; for she's famous for understanding the right side of a woman, and the wrong side of the law. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* MRS. MANDRAKE'S *House.*

MRS. MANDRAKE *discovered.*

Mrs. Man. Who is there? [*Calls.*

Enter Maid.

Maid. Madam!

Mrs. Man. Has any message been left for me to-day?

Maid. Yes, madam: here has been one from my lady Stillborn, that desired you not to be out of the way, for she expected to cry out every minute.

Mrs. Man. How! every minute!—Let me see.—[*Takes out a pocket-book.*] Stillborn—ay—she reckons with her husband from the first of April; and with sir James, from the first of March.—Ay, she's always a month before her time.—[*Knocking at the door.*] Go see who's at the door.

Maid. Yes, madam. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Man. Well, certainly there is not a woman in the world so willing to oblige mankind as myself! and really I have been so ever since the age of twelve, as I can remember. I have delivered as many women of great bellies, and helped as many to 'em, as any person in England; but my watching and cares have broken me quite, I am not the same woman I was forty years ago.

Enter RICHMORE.

Oh, Mr. Richmore! you're a sad man, a barbarous man, so you are! What will become of poor Clelia, Mr. Richmore? The poor creature is so big with her misfortunes, that they are not to be borne. [*Weeps.*

Rich. You, Mrs. Mandrake, are the fittest person in the world to ease her of 'em.

Mrs. Man. And won't you marry her, Mr. Richmore?

Rich. My conscience won't allow it; for I have sworn since to marry another.

Mrs. Man. And will you break your vows to Clelia?

Rich. Why not, when she has broke hers to me?

Mrs. Man. How's that, sir?

Rich. Why, she swore a hundred times never to grant me the favour, and yet, you know she broke her word.

Mrs. Man. But she loved, Mr. Richmore, and that was the reason she forgot her oath.

Rich. And I love Mr. Richmore, and that is the reason I forgot mine. Why should she be angry that I follow her own example, by doing the very same thing from the very same motive?

Mrs. Man. Well, well, take my word, you'll never thrive. I wonder how you can have the face to come near me, that am the witness of your horrid oaths and imprecations! Are not you afraid that the guilty chamber above-stairs should fall down upon your head? Yes, yes, I was accessary, I was so; but if ever you involve my honour in such a villany the second time—Ah, poor Clelia! I loved her as I did my own daughter—you seducing man! [*Weeps.*

Rich. Heigh-ho, my Aurelia!

Mrs. Man. Heigh-ho, she's very pretty!

Rich. Dost thou know her, my dear Mandrake?

Mrs. Man. Heigh-ho, she's very pretty! Ah,

you're a sad man! Poor Clelia was handsome, but indeed, breeding, puking, and longing, has broken her much. 'Tis a hard case, Mr. Richmore, for a young lady to see a thousand things, and long for a thousand things, and yet not dare to own that she longs for one. She had like to have miscarried t'other day for the pith of a loin of veal.—Ah, you barbarous man!—

Rich. But, my Aurelia! confirm me that you know her, and I'll adore thee.

Mrs. Man. You would fling five hundred guineas at my head, that you knew as much of her as I do: why, sir, I brought her into the world; I have had her sprawling in my lap. Ah! she was as plump as a puffin, sir.

Rich. I think she has no great portion to value herself upon; her reputation only will keep up the market. We must first make that cheap, by crying it down, and then she'll part with it at an easy rate.

Mrs. Man. But won't you provide for poor Clelia?

Rich. Provide! why han't I taught her a trade? Let her set up when she will, I'll engage her customers enough, because I can answer for the goodness of the ware.

Mrs. Man. Nay, but you ought to set her up with credit, and take a shop; that is, get her a husband. Have you no pretty gentleman your relation now, that wants a young virtuous lady with a handsome fortune? No young Templar that has spent his estate in the study of the law, and starves by the practice? No spruce officer that wants a handsome wife to make court for him among the major-generals? Have you none of these, sir?

Rich. Pho, pho, madam! you have tired me upon that subject. Do you think a lady that gave me so much trouble before possession shall ever give me any after it? No, no; had she been more obliging to me when I was in her power, I should be more civil to her now she's in mine: my assiduity beforehand was an over price; had she made a merit of the matter, she should have yielded sooner.

Mrs. Man. Nay, nay, sir; though you have no regard to her honour, yet you shall protect mine. How d'ye think I have secured my reputation so long among the people of best figure, but by keeping all mouths stopped? Sir, I'll have no clamours at me. Heavens help me, I have clamours enough at my door early and late in my t'other capacity! In short, sir, a husband for Clelia, or I banish you my presence for ever.

Rich. Thou art a necessary devil, and I can't want thee. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Man. Look'ee, sir, 'tis your own advantage; 'tis only making over your estate into the hands of a trustee; and though you don't absolutely command the premises, yet you may exact enough out of 'em for necessaries, when you will.

Rich. Patience a little, madam! I have a young nephew that is a captain of horse: he mortgaged the last morsel of his estate to me, to make up his equipage for the last campaign. Perhaps you know him; he's a brisk fellow, much about court, captain Trueman.

Mrs. Man. Trueman! ads my life, he's one of my babies! I can tell you the very minute he was born—precisely at three a clock next St. George's day Trueman will be two-and-twenty; a stripling, the prettiest, good-natured child, and your nephew! he must be the man; and shall be the man; I have a kindness for him.

Rich. But we must have a care; the fellow wants neither sense nor courage.

Mrs. Man. Phu, phu! never fear her part, she shan't want instructions; and then for her lying-in a little abruptly, 'tis my business to reconcile matters there, a fright or a fall excuses that. Lard, sir! I do these things every day.

Rich. 'Tis pity then to put you out of your road; and Clelia shall have a husband.

Mrs. Man. Spoke like a man of honour! and now I'll serve you again. This Aurelia, you say—

Rich. Oh, she distracts me! Her beauty, family, and virtue, make her a noble pleasure.

Mrs. Man. And you have a mind for that reason to get her a husband?

Rich. Yes, faith; I have another young relation at Cambridge is just going into orders; and I think such a fine woman, with fifteen hundred pound, is a better presentation than any living in my gift: and why should he like the cure the worse that an incumbent was there before?

Mrs. Man. Thou art a pretty fellow! At the same moment you would persuade me that you love a woman to madness, are you contriving how to part with her.

Rich. If I loved her not to madness I should not run into these contradictions. Here, my dear mother, Aurelia's the word. [*Offers her money.*

Mrs. Man. Pardon me, sir!—[*Refusing the money.*] Did you ever know me mercenary? No, no, sir; virtue is its own reward.

Rich. Nay, but, madam, I owe you for the teeth powder you sent me.

Mrs. Man. Oh, that's another matter, sir!—[*Takes the money.*] I hope you like it, sir?

Rich. Extremely, madam.—[*Aside.*] But it was somewhat dear of twenty guineas.

Enter Footman.

Foot. Madam, here is Mr. Wouldbe's footman below with a message from his master.

Mrs. Man. I come to him presently.—[*Exit* Footman.] Do you know that Wouldbe loves Aurelia's cousin and companion, Mrs. Constance with the great fortune, and that I solicit for him?

Rich. Why, she's engaged to his elder brother! besides, young Wouldbe has no money to prosecute an affair of such consequence. You can have no hopes of success there, I'm sure.

Mrs. Man. Truly, I have no great hopes; but an industrious body, you know, would do anything rather than be idle: the aunt is very near her time, and I have access to the family when I please.

Rich. Now I think on't; prithee, get the letter from Wouldbe that I gave him just now. It would be proper to our designs upon Trueman that it should not be exposed.

Mrs. Man. And you showed Clelia's letter to Wouldbe?

Rich. Yes.

Mrs. Man. Eh, you barbarous man! Who the devil would oblige you? What pleasure can you take in exposing the poor creature? Dear little child, 'tis pity, indeed it is!

Rich. Madam the messenger waits below; so I'll take my leave. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Man. Ah, you're a sad man! [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Park.*

CONSTANCE *and* AURELIA *discovered.*

Aur. Prithee, cousin Constance, be cheerful; let the dead lord sleep in peace, and look up to the living; take pen, ink, and paper, and write immediately to your lover, that he is now a baron of England, and that you long to be a baroness.

Con. Nay, Aurelia, there is some regard due to the memory of the father for the respect I bear the son; besides I don't know how, I could wish my young lord were at home in this juncture. This brother of his—some mischief will happen—I had a very ugly dream last night. In short, I am eaten up with the spleen, my dear.

Aur. Come, come, walk about and divert it; the air will do you good; think of other people's affairs a little. When did you see Clelia?

Con. I'm glad you mentioned her; don't you observe her gaiety to be much more forced than formerly? her humour don't sit so easy upon her.

Aur. No, nor her stays neither, I can assure you.

Con. Did you observe how she devoured the pomegranates yesterday?

Aur. She talks of visiting a relation in Leicestershire.

Con. She fainted away in the country dance t'other night.

Aur. Richmore shunned her in the Walk last week.

Con. And his footman laughed.

Aur. She takes laudanum to make her sleep a nights.

Con. Ah, poor Clelia! What will she do, cousin?

Aur. Do! why nothing till the nine months be up.

Con. That's cruel, Aurelia, how can you make merry with her misfortunes? I am positive she was no easy conquest; some singular villany has been practised upon her.

Aur. Yes, yes, the fellow would be practising upon me too, I thank him.

Con. Have a care, cousin, he has a promising person.

Aur. Nay, for that matter, his promising person may as soon be broke as his promising vows. Nature indeed has made him a giant, and he wars with heaven like the giants of old.

Con. Then why will you admit his visits?

Aur. I never did: but all the servants are more his than our own. He has a golden key to every door in the house; besides, he makes my uncle believe that his intentions are honourable; and, indeed, he has said nothing yet to disprove it. But, cousin, do you see who comes yonder, sliding along the Mall?

Con. Captain Trueman, I protest! the campaign has improved him, he makes a very clean, well-furnished figure.

Aur. Youthful, easy, and good-natured. I could wish he would know us.

Con. Are you sure he's well-bred?

Aur. I tell you he's good-natured, and I take good manners to be nothing but a natural desire to be easy and agreeable to whatever conversation we fall into; and a porter with this is mannerly in his way; and a duke without it, has but the breeding of a dancing-master.

Con. I like him for his affection to my young lord.

Aur. And I like him for his affection to my young person.

Con. How, how, cousin, you never told me that.

Aur. How should I? He never told it me, but I have discovered it by a great many signs and tokens, that are better security for his heart than ten thousand vows and promises.

Con. He's Richmore's nephew.

Aur. Ah, would he were his heir too! He's a pretty fellow. But, then, he's a soldier; and must share his time with his mistress, honour, in Flanders. No, no, I'm resolved against a man that disappears all the summer like a woodcock.

Enter Captain TRUEMAN *behind them, as passing over the stage.*

True. That's for me whoever spoke it.—[*The Ladies turn about.*] Aurelia!

Con. What, captain, you're afraid of everything but the enemy!

True. I have reason, ladies, to be most apprehensive where there is most danger. The enemy is satisfied with a leg or an arm, but here I'm in hazard of losing my heart.

Aur. None in the world, sir, nobody here designs to attack it.

True. But suppose it be assaulted, and taken already, madam?

Aur. Then we'll return it without ransom.

True. But suppose, madam, the prisoner choose to stay where it is?

Aur. That were to turn deserter, and you know, captain, what such deserve.

True. The punishment it undergoes this moment—shot to death.

Con. Nay, then, 'tis time for me to put in.—Pray, sir, have you heard the news of my lord Wouldbe's death?

True. [*To* CONSTANCE.] People mind not the death of others, madam, that are expiring themselves.—[*To* AURELIA.] Do you consider, madam, the penalty of wounding a man in the Park?

Aur. Heyday! Why, captain, d'ye intend to make a Vigo business of it, and break the boom at once? Sir, if you only rally, pray let my cousin have her share; or, if you would be particular, pray be more respectful; not so much upon the declaration, I beseech you, sir.

True. I have been, fair creature, a perfect coward in my passion; I have had hard strugglings with my fear before I durst engage, and now perhaps behave but too desperately.

Aur. Sir, I am very sorry you have said so much; for I must punish you for't, though it be contrary to my inclination.—Come, cousin, will you walk?

Con. Servant, sir! [*Exit with* AURELIA.

True. Charming creature!—*I must punish you for't, though it be contrary to my inclination.*—Hope and despair in a breath. But I'll think the best. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—BENJAMIN WOULDBE'S *Lodgings.*

Enter BENJAMIN WOULDBE *and* MRS. MANDRAKE *meeting.*

Ben. Would. Thou life and soul of secret dealings, welcome!

Mrs. Man. My dear child, bless thee!—Who would have imagined that I brought this great rogue into the world? He makes me an old woman, I protest.—But, adso, my child, I forgot; I'm sorry for the loss of your father, sorry at my heart, poor man!—[*Weeps.*] Mr. Wouldbe, have you got a drop of brandy in your closet? I an't very well to-day.

Ben. Would. That you shan't want; but be pleased to sit, my dear mother.—Here, Jack, the brandy-bottle.—[*Calls to* Servant.] Now, madam, I have occasion to use you in dressing up a handsome cheat for me.

Mrs. Man. I defy any chambermaid in England to do it better. I have dressed up a hundred and fifty cheats in my time.

Enter JACK *with the brandy-bottle.*

Here, boy, this glass is too big; carry it away, I'll take a sup out of the bottle. [*Exit* JACK.

Ben. Would. Right, madam. And my business being very urgent—in three words, 'tis this—

Mrs. Man. Hold, sir, till I take advice of my counsel.—[*Drinks.*] There is nothing more comfortable to a poor creature, and fitter to revive wasting spirits, than a little plain brandy. I an't for your hot spirits, your rosa solis, your ratafias, your orange-waters, and the like: a moderate glass of cool Nantes is the thing.

Ben. Would. But to our business, madam.—My father is dead, and I have a mind to inherit his estate.

Mrs. Man. You put the case very well.

Ben. Would. One of two things I must choose—either to be a lord or a beggar.

Mrs. Man. Be a lord to choose:—though I have known some that have chosen both.

Ben. Would. I have a brother that I love very well; but, since one of us must want, I had rather he should starve than I.

Mrs. Man. Upon my conscience, dear heart, you're in the right on't.

Ben. Would. Now your advice upon these heads.

Mrs. Man. They be matters of weight, and I must consider.—[*Drinks.*] Is there a will in the case?

Ben. Would. There is; which excludes me from every foot of the estate.

Mrs. Man. That's bad.—Where's your brother?

Ben. Would. He's now in Germany, in his way to England, and is expected very soon.

Mrs. Man. How soon?

Ben. Would. In a month or less.

Mrs. Man. O ho! a month is a great while! our business must be done in an hour or two. We must—[*Drinks*] suppose your brother to be dead; nay, he shall be actually dead—and, my lord, my humble service t'ye!

Ben. Would. O madam, I'm your ladyship's most devoted! Make your words good, and I'll—

Mrs. Man. Say no more, sir; you shall have it, you shall have it.

Ben. Would. Ay, but how, dear Mrs. Mandrake?

Mrs. Man. Mrs. Mandrake! is that all? Why not mother, aunt, grandmother? Sir, I have done more for you this moment than all the relations you have in the world.

Ben. Would. Let me hear it.

Mrs. Man. By the strength of this potent inspiration, I have made you a peer of England, with seven thousand pound a year.—My lord, I wish you joy. [*Drinks.*

Ben. Would. The woman's mad, I believe!

Mrs. Man. Quick, quick, my lord! Counterfeit a letter presently from Germany, that your brother is killed in a duel; let it be directed to your father, and fall into the hands of the steward when you are by.—What sort of fellow is the steward?

Ben. Would. Why, a timorous, half-honest man, that a little persuasion will make a whole knave. He wants courage to be throughly just or entirely a villain; but good backing will make him either.

Mrs. Man. And he shan't want that! I tell you the letter must come into his hands when you are by; upon this you take immediate possession, and so you have the best part of the law of your side.

Ben. Would. But suppose my brother comes in the mean time?

Mrs. Man. This must be done this very moment. Let him come when you're in possession, I'll warrant we'll find a way to keep him out.

Ben. Would. But, how, my dear contriver?

Mrs. Man. By your father's will, man, your father's will:—that is, one that your father might have made, and which we will make for him. I'll send you a nephew of my own, a lawyer, that shall do the business. Go, get into possession, possession, I say; let us have but the estate to back the suit, and you'll find the law too strong for justice, I warrant you.

Ben. Would. My oracle! How shall we revel in delight when this great prediction is accomplished!—But one thing yet remains, my brother's mistress, the charming Constance—let her be mine.

Mrs. Man. Pho! pho! she's yours o' course; she's contracted to you; for she's engaged to marry no man but my lord Wouldbe's son and heir; now, you being the person, she's recoverable by law.

Ben. Would. Marry her! no, no, she's contracted to him; 'twere injustice to rob a brother of his wife, an easier favour will satisfy me.

Mrs. Man. Why, truly, as you say, that favour is so easy that I wonder they make such a bustle about it. But get you gone and mind your affairs, I must about mine.—Oh—I had forgot—where's that foolish letter you had this morning from Richmore?

Ben. Would. I have posted it up in the Chocolate-house.

Mrs. Man. Yaw!—[*Shrieks.*] I shall fall into fits; hold me—

Ben. Would. No, no, I did but jest; here it is. But be assured, madam, I wanted only time to have exposed it.

Mrs. Man. Ah, you barbarous man! why so?

Ben. Would. Because, when knaves of our sex, and fools of yours meet, they make the best jest in the world.

Mrs. Man. Sir, the world has a better share in

the jest when we are the knaves and you the fools. But look'ee, sir, if ever you open your mouth about this trick, I'll discover all your tricks; therefore, silence and safety on both sides.

Ben. Would. Madam, you need not doubt my silence at present; because my own affairs will employ me sufficiently; so there's your letter. —[*Gives the letter.*] And now to write my own.

Mrs. Man. Adieu, my lord!—[*Exit* WOULDBE.] Let me see.—[*Opens the letter and reads.*] *If there be solemnity in protestations*—that's foolish, very foolish! Why should she expect solemnity in protestations?—Um, um, um.—*I may still depend upon the faith of my Richmore.*—Ah, poor Clelia!—Um, um, um.—*I can no longer hide the effects on't from the world.*—The effects on't! How modestly is that expressed! Well, 'tis a pretty letter, and I'll keep it. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* Lord WOULDBE'S *House.*

Mr. *and* Mrs. CLEARACCOUNT *discovered.*

Mrs. Clear. You are to blame, you are much to blame, husband, in being so scrupulous.

Clear. 'Tis true; this foolish conscience of mine has been the greatest bar to my fortune.

Mrs. Clear. And will ever be so. Tell me but one that thrives, and I'll show you a hundred that starve by it. Do you think 'tis fourscore pound a year makes my lord Gouty's steward's wife live at the rate of four hundred? Upon my word, my dear, I'm as good a gentlewoman as she, and I expect to be maintained accordingly. 'Tis conscience I warrant that buys her the point-heads and diamond necklace? Was it conscience that bought her the fine house in Jermyn-street? Is it conscience that enables the steward to buy when the lord is forced to sell?

Clear. But what would you have me do?

Mrs. Clear. Do! now's your time; that small morsel of an estate your lord bought lately, a thing not worth mentioning; take it towards your daughter Molly's portion. What's two hundred a year? 'twill never be missed.

Clear. 'Tis but a small matter, I must confess; and as a reward for my past faithful service, I think it but reasonable I should cheat a little now.

Mrs. Clear. Reasonable! all the reason that can be; if the ungrateful world won't reward an honest man, why let an honest man reward himself. There's five hundred pounds you received but two days ago, lay them aside. You may easily sink it in the charge of the funeral. Do my dear now, kiss me, and do it.

Clear. Well, you have such a winning way with you! But, my dear, I'm so much afraid of my young lord's coming home; he's a cunning close man, they say, and will examine my accounts very narrowly.

Mrs. Clear. Ay, my dear, would you had the younger brother to deal with! you might manage him as you pleased. I see him coming. Let us weep, let us weep.

[*They pull out their handkerchiefs, and seem to mourn.*

Enter BENJAMIN WOULDBE.

Clear. Ah, sir! we have all lost a father, a friend, and a supporter.

Ben. Would. Ay, Mr. Steward, we must submit to fate, as he has done. And it is no small addition to my grief, honest Mr. Clearaccount, that it is not in my power to supply my father's place to you and yours. Your sincerity and justice to the dead merits the greatest regard from those that survive him. Had I but my brother's ability, or he my inclinations, I'll assure you, Mrs. Clearaccount, you should not have such cause to mourn.

Mrs. Clear. Ah, good noble sir!

Clear. Your brother, sir, I hear, is a very severe man.

Ben. Would. He is what the world calls a prudent man, Mr. Steward. I have often heard him very severe upon men of your business; and has declared, that for form's sake indeed he would keep a steward, but that he would inspect into all his accounts himself.

Mrs. Clear. Ay, Mr. Wouldbe, you have more sense than to do these things; you have more honour than to trouble your head with your own affairs. Would to Heavens we were to serve you!

Ben. Would. Would I could serve you, madam, without injustice to my brother.

Enter Footman.

Foot. A letter for my lord Wouldbe.

Clear. It comes too late, alas! for his perusal. Let me see it. [*Opens and reads.*

Frankfort, Octob. 10, *new style.*

Frankfort! where's Frankfort, sir?

Ben. Would. In Germany. This letter must be from my brother; I suppose he's a-coming home.

Clear. 'Tis none of his hand. Let me see. [*Reads.*

My Lord,

I am troubled at this unhappy occasion of sending to your lordship; your brave son, and my dear friend, was yesterday unfortunately killed in a duel by a German count—

I shall love a German count as long as I live.—My lord, my lord, now I may call you so, since your elder brother's—dead.

Ben. Would., Mrs. Clear. How?

Clear. Read there.

[*Gives the letter*, WOULDBE *peruses it.*

Ben. Would. Oh, my fate! a father and a brother in one day! Heavens! 'tis too much.—Where is the fatal messenger?

Foot. A gentleman, sir, who said he came post on purpose. He was afraid the contents of the letter would unqualify my lord for company; so he would take another time to wait on him. [*Exit.*

Ben. Would. Nay, then 'tis true; and there is truth in dreams. Last night I dreamed—

Mrs. Clear. Nay, my lord, I dreamed too; I dreamed I saw your brother dressed in a long minister's gown (Lord bless us!), with a book in his hand, walking before a dead body to the grave.

Ben. Would. Well, Mr. Clearaccount, get mourning ready.

Clear. Will your lordship have the old coach covered, or a new one made?

Ben. Would. A new one. The old coach, with the grey horses, I give to Mrs. Clearaccount here; 'tis not fit she should walk the streets.

Mrs. Clear. [*Aside.*] Heavens bless the German count, I say!—[*Aloud.*] But, my lord—

Ben. Would. No reply, madam, you shall have it: and receive it but as the earnest of my favours.—Mr. Clearaccount, I double your salary, and all the servants' wages, to moderate their grief for our great losses. Pray, sir, take order about these affairs.

Clear. I shall, my lord.

[*Exit with* Mrs. Clearaccount.

Ben. Would. So! I have got possession of the castle, and if I had but a little law to fortify me now, I believe we might hold it out a great while. Oh! here comes my attorney.

Enter Subtleman.

Mr. Subtleman, your servant.

Sub. My lord, I wish you joy; my aunt Mandrake has sent me to receive your commands.

Ben. Would. Has she told you anything of the affair?

Sub. Not a word, my lord.

Ben. Would. Why then—come nearer.—Can you make a man right heir to an estate during the life of an elder brother?

Sub. I thought you had been the eldest.

Ben. Would. That we are not yet agreed upon; for you must know, there is an impertinent fellow that takes a fancy to dispute the seniority with me; for, look'ee, sir, my mother has unluckily sowed discord in the family, by bringing forth twins. My brother, 'tis true, was first-born; but, I believe from the bottom of my heart, I was the first-begotten.

Sub. I understand—you are come to an estate and dignity, that by justice indeed is your own, but by law it falls to your brother.

Ben. Would. I had rather, Mr. Subtleman, it were his by justice and mine by law; for I would have the strongest title, if possible.

Sub. I am very sorry there should happen any breach between brethren: so I think it would be but a christian and charitable act to take away all farther disputes, by making you true heir to the estate by the last will of your father. Look'ee, I'll divide stakes; you shall yield the eldership and honour to him, and he shall quit his estate to you.

Ben. Would. Why, as you say, I don't much care if I do grant him the eldest, half an hour is but a trifle. But how shall we do about this will? who shall we get to prove it?

Sub. Never trouble yourself for that, I expect a cargo of witnesses and usquebaugh by the first fair wind.

Ben. Would. But we can't stay for them; it must be done immediately.

Sub. Well, well; we'll find somebody, I warrant you, to make oath of his last words.

Ben. Would. That's impossible; for my father died of an apoplexy, and did not speak at all.

Sub. That's nothing, sir: he's not the first dead man that I have made to speak.

Ben. Would. You're a great master of speech, I don't question, sir; and I can assure you there will be ten guineas for every word you extort from him in my favour.

Sub. O sir, that's enough to make your great-grandfather speak.

Ben. Would. Come then, I'll carry you to my steward; he shall give you the names of the manors, and the true titles and denominations of the estate, and then you shall go to work. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*The Park.*

Enter Richmore *and* Captain Trueman, *meeting.*

Rich. O brave cuz! you're very happy with the fair, I find. Pray which of those two ladies you encountered just now has your adoration?

True. She that commands by forbidding it: and since I had courage to declare to herself, I dare now own it to the world: Aurelia, sir, is my angel.

Rich. Ha!—[*A long pause.*] Sir, I find you're of everybody's religion; but methinks you make a bold flight at first. Do you think your captain's pay will stake against so high a gamester?

True. What do you mean?

Rich. Mean! bless me, sir, mean!—You're a man of mighty honour, we all know.—But I'll tell you a secret—the thing is public already.

True. I should be proud that all mankind were acquainted with it; I should despise the passion that could make me either ashamed or afraid to own it.

Rich. Ha! ha! ha! prithee, dear captain, no more of these rhodomontados; you may as soon put a standing-army upon us. I'll tell you another secret—five hundred pound is the least penny.

True. Nay, to my knowledge, she has fifteen hundred.

Rich. Nay, to my knowledge, she took five.

True. Took five! how? where?

Rich. In her lap, in her lap, captain, where should it be?

True. I'm amazed!

Rich. So am I; that she could be so unreasonable.—Fifteen hundred pound! 'sdeath! had she that price from you?

True. 'Sdeath! I meant her portion.

Rich. Why, what have you to do with her portion?

True. I loved her up to marriage, by this light!

Rich. Marriage! ha! ha! ha! I love the gipsy for her cunning. A young, easy, amorous, credulous fellow of two-and-twenty, was just the game she wanted; I find she presently singled you out from the herd.

True. You distract me!

Rich. A soldier too, that must follow the wars abroad, and leave her to engagements at home.

True. Death and furies! I'll be revenged!

Rich. Why, what can you do? You'll challenge her, will you?

True. Her reputation was spotless when I went over.

Rich. So was the reputation of mareschal Boufflers; but d'ye think, that while you were beating the French abroad, that we were idle at home? No, no, we have had our sieges, our capitulations, and surrendries, and all that. We have cut ourselves out good winter quarters as well as you.

True. And are you billeted there?

Rich. Look'ee, Trueman, you ought to be very trusty to a secret, that has saved you from destruction. In plain terms, I have buried five hundred pounds in that little spot, and I should think it very hard if you took it over my head.

True. Not by a lease for life, I can assure you: but I shall—

Rich. What! you han't five hundred pounds to give? Look'ee, since you can make no sport, spoil none. In a year or two, she dwindles to a perfect basset-bank; everybody may play at it that pleases, and then you may put in for a piece or two.

True. Dear sir, I could worship you for this.

Rich. Not for this, nephew; for I did not intend it, but I came to seek you upon another affair. Were not you in the presence last night?

True. I was.

Rich. Did not you talk to Clelia, my lady Taper's niece?

True. A fine woman.

Rich. Well, I met her upon the stairs, and handing her to her coach, she asked me if you were not my nephew; and said two or three warm things, that persuade me she likes you. Her relations have interest at court, and she has money in her pocket.

True. But—this devil Aurelia still sticks with me.

Rich. What then! the way to love in one place with success, is to marry in another with convenience. Clelia has four thousand pound; this applied to your reigning ambition, whether love or advancement, will go a great way: and for her virtue and conduct, be assured, that nobody can give a better account of it than myself.

True. I am willing to believe from this late accident, that you consult my honour and interest in what you propose, and therefore I am satisfied to be governed.

Rich. I see the very lady in the walk.—We'll about it.

True. I wait on you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*A Room in* Lord Wouldbe's *House.*

Benjamin Wouldbe, Subtleman, *and* Clearaccount, *discovered.*

Ben. Would. Well, Mr. Subtleman, you are sure the will is firm and good in law?

Sub. I warrant you, my lord: and for the last words to prove it, here they are—look'ee, Mr. Clearaccount—*Yes*—that is an answer to the question that was put to him (you know) by those about him when he was a-dying—yes, or no, he must have said; so we have chosen yes—*Yes, I have made my will, as it may be found in the custody of Mr. Clearaccount my steward; and I desire it may stand as my last will and testament.*—Did you ever hear a dying man's words more to the purpose? An apoplexy! I tell you, my lord had intervals to the last.

Clear. Ay, but how shall these words be proved?

Sub. My lord shall speak 'em now.

Ben. Would. Shall he, faith?

Sub. Ay, now—if the corpse ben't buried. Look'ee, sir, these words must be put into his mouth, and drawn out again before us all; and if they won't be his last words then—I'll be perjured.

Ben. Would. What! violate the dead! it must not be, Mr. Subtleman.

Sub. With all my heart, sir! But I think you had better violate the dead of a tooth or so, than violate the living of seven thousand pound a year.

Ben. Would. But is there no other way?

Sub. No, sir. Why, d'ye think Mr. Clearaccount here will hazard soul and body to swear they are his last words, unless they be made his last words? For my part, sir, I'll swear to nothing but what I see with my eyes come out of a man's mouth.

Ben. Would. But it looks so unnatural.

Sub. What, to open a man's mouth, and put in a bit of paper!—this is all.

Ben. Would. But the body is cold, and his teeth can't be got asunder.

Sub. But what occasion has your father for teeth now? I tell you what, I knew a gentleman, three days buried, taken out of his grave, and his dead hand set to his last will, (unless somebody made him sign another afterwards,) and I know the estate to be held by that tenure to this day; and a firm tenure it is; for a dead hand holds fastest; and let me tell you, dead teeth will fasten as hard.

Ben. Would. Well, well, use your pleasure, you understand the law best.—[*Exeunt* Subtleman *and* Clearaccount.] What a mighty confusion is brought into families by sudden death! Men should do well to settle their affairs in time. Had my father done this before he was taken ill, what a trouble had he saved us! But he was taken suddenly, poor man!

Re-enter Subtleman.

Sub. Your father still bears you the old grudge I find. It was with much struggling he consented; I never knew a man so loath to speak in my life.

Ben. Would. He was always a man of few words.

Sub. Now I may safely bear witness myself, as the scrivener there present: I love to do things with a clear conscience. [*Subscribes.*

Ben. Would. But the law requires three witnesses.

Sub. Oh! I shall pick up a couple more, that perhaps may take my word for't. But is not Mr. Clearaccount in your interest?

Ben. Would. I hope so.

Sub. Then he shall be one; a witness in the family goes a great way; besides, these foreign evidences are risen confoundedly since the wars. I hope, if mine escape the privateers, to make a hundred pound an ear of every head of 'em. But the steward is an honest man, and shall save you the charges. [*Exit.*

Ben. Would. The pride of birth, the heats of appetite, and fears of want, are strong temptations to injustice.—But why injustice?—The world has broke all civilities with me, and left me in the eldest state of nature, wild, where force, or cunning first created right. I cannot say I ever knew a father; 'tis true, I was begotten in his lifetime, but I was posthumous born, and lived not till he died. My hours indeed I numbered, but ne'er enjoyed 'em till this moment.—My brother! what is brother? we are all so; and the first two were enemies. He stands before me in the road of life to rob me of my pleasures. My senses, formed by nature for delight, are all alarmed. My sight, my hearing, taste and touch, call loudly on me for their objects, and they shall be satisfied. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Lord Wouldbe's *House.*

Benjamin Wouldbe *is discovered dressing,* Frisure *attending.* Clearaccount, Comic, *and a levee of* Gentlemen, *in waiting.*

Ben. Would. [*Aside.*] Surely, the greatest ornament of quality is a clean and a numerous levee! Such a crowd of attendance for the cheap reward of words and promises, distinguishes the nobility from those that pay wages to their servants.—[First Gentleman *whispers.*] Sir, I shall speak to the commissioners, and use all my interest, I can assure you, sir.—[Second Gentleman *whispers.*] Sir, I shall meet some of your board this evening; let me see you to-morrow.—[Third Gentleman *whispers.*] Sir, I'll consider of it.—[*Aside.*] That fellow's breath stinks of tobacco.—O Mr. Comic, your servant!

Com. My lord, I wish you joy; I have something to show your lordship.

Ben. Would. What is it, pray, sir?

Com. I have an elegy upon the dead lord, and a panegyric upon the living one.—*In utrumque paratus,* my lord.

Ben. Would. Ha! ha! very pretty, Mr. Comic. But pray, Mr. Comic, why don't you write plays? it would give one an opportunity of serving you.

Com. My lord, I have writ one.

Ben. Would. Was it ever acted?

Com. No, my lord; but it has been a-rehearsing these three years and a half.

Ben. Would. A long time. There must be a great deal of business in it surely.

Com. No, my lord, none at all. I have another play just finished, but that I want a plot for't.

Ben. Would. A plot! you should read the Italian and Spanish plays, Mr. Comic. I like your verses here mightily.—Here, Mr. Clearaccount!

Com. Now for five guineas at least. [*Aside.*

Ben. Would. Here, give Mr. Comic, give him —give him the Spanish play that lies in the closet window.—[*To a* Gentleman.] Captain, can I do you any service?

Fourth Gent. Pray, my lord, use your interest with the general for that vacant commission: I hope, my lord, the blood I have already lost, may entitle me to spill the remainder in my country's cause.

Ben. Would. All the reason in the world.—Captain, you may depend upon me for all the service I can.

Fifth Gent. I hope your lordship won't forget to speak to the general about that vacant commission. Although I have never made a campaign, yet, my lord, my interest in the country can raise me men, which, I think, should prefer me to that gentleman, whose bloody disposition frightens the poor people from listing.

Ben. Would. All the reason in the world, sir; you may depend upon me for all the service in my power.—Captain, I'll do your business for you.—Sir, I'll speak to the general; I shall see him at the house.

Enter Alderman.

Oh, Mr. Alderman, your servant!—Gentlemen all, I beg your pardon!—[*Exeunt* Levee.] Mr. Alderman, have you any service to command me?

Ald. Your lordship's humble servant!—I have a favour to beg. You must know, I have a graceless son, a fellow that drinks and swears eternally, keeps a whore in every corner of the town: in short, he's fit for no kind of thing but a soldier. I am so tired of him that I intend to throw him into the army, let the fellow be ruined, if he will.

Ben. Would. I commend your paternal care, sir! Can I do you any service in this affair?

Ald. Yes, my lord: there is a vacant company in colonel Whatd'yecalum's regiment, and if your lordship would but speak to the general—

Ben. Would. Has your son ever served?

Ald. Served! yes, my lord, he's an ensign in the trainbands.

Ben. Would. Has he ever signalised his courage?

Ald. Often, often, my lord; but one day particularly, you must know, his captain was so busy shipping of a cargo of cheeses, that he left my son to command in his place—would you believe it, my lord? he charged up Cheapside, in the front of the buff-coats with such bravery and courage, that I could not forbear wishing, in the loyalty of my heart, for ten thousand such officers upon the Rhine. Ah! my lord, we must employ such fellows as him, or we shall never humble the French king.—Now, my lord, if you could find a convenient time to hint these things to the general—

Ben. Would. All the reason in the world, Mr. Alderman—I'll do you all the service I can.

Ald. You may tell him; he's a man of courage, fit for the service; and then he loves hardship—he sleeps every other night in the round-house.

Ben. Would. I'll do you all the service I can.

Ald. Then, my lord, he salutes with his pike so very handsomely, it went to his mistress's heart, t'other day.—Then he beats a drum like an angel.

Ben. Would. Sir, I'll do you all the service I can—

[*Not taking the least notice of the* Alderman *all this while, but dressing himself in the glass.*

Ald. But, my lord, the hurry of your lordship's affairs may put my business out of your head; therefore, my lord, I'll presume to leave you some memorandum.

Ben. Would. I'll do you all the service I can. [*Not minding him.*

Ald. Pray, my lord,—[*Pulling him by the sleeve*] give me leave for a memorandum; my glove, I suppose, will do. Here, my lord, pray remember me—

[*Lays his glove upon the table, and exit.*

Ben. Would. I'll do you all the service I can.—What, is he gone? 'Tis the most rude familiar fellow!—Faugh, what a greasy gauntlet is here!—[*A purse drops out of the glove.*] Oh! no, no; the glove is a clean well-made glove, and the owner of it—the most respectful person I have seen this morning; he knows what distance—[*Chink-*

ing the purse] is due to a man of quality.—But what must I do for this?—Frisure, do you remember what the alderman said to me?

Fris. No, my lord, I thought your lordship had.

Ben. Would. This blockhead thinks a man of quality can mind what people say—when they do something, 'tis another case.—Here, call him back.—[*Exit* FRISURE.] He talked something of the general, and his son, and trainbands, I know not what stuff.

Re-enter FRISURE *with* Alderman.

Oh, Mr. Alderman, I have put your memorandum in my pocket.

Ald. Oh, my lord, you do me too much honour!

Ben. Would. But, Mr. Alderman, the business you were talking of; it shall be done, but if you gave a short note of it to my secretary, it would not be amiss.—But, Mr. Alderman, han't you the fellow to this glove, it fits me mighty well—[*Putting on the glove.*] It looks so like a challenge to give a man an odd glove—and I would have nothing that looks like enmity between you and I, Mr. Alderman.

Ald. Truly, my lord, I intended the other glove for a memorandum to the colonel, but since your lordship has a mind to't— [*Gives the glove.*

Ben. Would. Here, Frisure, lead this gentleman to my secretary, and bid him take a note of his business.

Ald. But, my lord, don't do me all the service you can now.

Ben. Would. Well, I won't do you all the service I can.—[*Exeunt* FRISURE *and* Alderman.] These citizens have a strange capacity of soliciting sometimes.

Re-enter CLEARACCOUNT.

Clear. My lord, here are your tailor, your vintner, your bookseller, and half-a-dozen more with their bills at the door, and they desire their money.

Ben. Would. Tell 'em, Mr. Clearaccount, that when I was a private gentleman, I had nothing else to do but to run in debt, and now that I have got into a higher rank, I'm so very busy I can't pay it. As for that clamorous rogue of a tailor, speak him fair till he has made up my liveries: then about a year and a half hence, be at leisure to put him off; for a year and a half longer.

Clear. My lord, there's a gentleman below calls himself Mr. Basset, he says your lordship owes him fifty guineas that he won of you at cards.

Ben. Would. Look'ee, sir, the gentleman's money is a debt of honour, and must be paid immediately.

Clear. Your father thought otherwise, my lord. He always took care to have the poor tradesmen satisfied, whose only subsistence lay in the use of their money, and was used to say, that nothing was honourable but what was honest.

Ben. Would. My father might say what he pleased, he was a nobleman of very singular humours: but in my notion there are not two things in nature more different than honour and honesty. Now your honesty is a little mechanic quality, well enough among citizens, people that do nothing but pitiful mean actions according to law; but your honour flies a much higher pitch, and will do anything that's free and spontaneous, but scorns to level itself to what is only just.

Clear. But I think it a little hard to have these poor people starve for want of their money, and yet pay this sharping rascal fifty guineas.

Ben. Would. Sharping rascal! what a barbarism that is! Why he wears as good wigs, as fine linen, and keeps as good company, as any at White's; and between you and I, sir, this sharping rascal, as you are pleased to call him, shall make more interest among the nobility with his cards and counters, than a soldier shall with his sword and pistol. Pray let him have fifty guineas immediately. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Street before* Lord WOULDBE's *House.*

Enter HERMES WOULDBE, *writing in a pocket-book.*

Herm. Would. *Monday the 14th of December, 1702, I arrived safe in London, and so concluding my travels*— [*Puts up the book.*

Now welcome country, father, friends,
My brother too, (if brothers can be friends:)
But above all, my charming fair, my Constance.
Through all the mazes of my wandering steps,
Through all the various climes that I have run;
Her love has been the loadstone of my course,
Her eyes the stars that pointed me the way.
Had not her charms my heart entire possess'd,
Who knows what Circe's artful voice and look
Might have ensnared my travelling youth,
And fix'd me to enchantment?
Here comes my fellow-traveller.

Enter TEAGUE, *with a portmantle, which he throws down and sits on.*

What makes you sit upon the portmantle, Teague? You'll rumple the things.

Teague. Be me shoule, maishter, I did carry the portmantle till it tired me; and now the portmantle shall carry me till I tire him.

Herm. Would. And how d'ye like London, Teague, after our travels?

Teague. Fet, dear joy, 'tis the bravest plaase I have sheen in my peregrinations, exshepting my nown brave shitty of Carick-Vergus.—Uf, uf, dere ish a very fragrant shmell hereabouts.—Maishter, shall I run to that paishtry-cook's for shix penny-worths of boiled beef?

Herm. Would. Though this fellow travelled the world over he would never lose his brogue nor his stomach.—Why, you cormorant, so hungry and so early!

Teague. Early! Deel tauke me, maishter, 'tish a great deal more than almost twelve a-clock.

Herm. Would. Thou art never happy unless thy guts be stuffed up to thy eyes.

Teague. O maishter, dere ish a dam way of distance, and the deel a bit between.

Enter BENJAMIN WOULDBE *in a chair, passing over the stage, with four or five* Footmen *before him.*

Herm. Would. Heyday, who comes here? with one, two, three, four, five footmen! Some young fellow just tasting the sweet vanity of fortune.—Run, Teague, inquire who that is.

Teague. Yes, maishter.—[*Runs to one of the* Footmen.] Sir, will you give my humble shervish to your maishter, and tell him to send me word fat naam ish upon him.

Foot. You would know fat naam ish upon him?

Teague. Yesh, fet would I.

Foot. Why, what are you, sir?

Teague. Be me shoul, I am a shentleman bred and born, and dere ish my maishter.

Foot. Then your master would know it?

Teague. Arrah, you fool, ish it not the saam ting?

Foot. Then tell your master 'tis the young lord Wouldbe, just come to his estate by the death of his father and elder brother. [*Exit.*

Herm. Would. What do I hear?

Teague. You hear that you are dead, maishter; fere vil you please to be buried?

Herm. Would. But art thou sure it was my brother?

Teague. Be me shoul it was him nown self; I know'd him fery well, after his man told me.

Herm. Would. The business requires that I be convinced with my own eyes; I'll follow him, and know the bottom on't.—Stay here till I return.

Teague. Dear maishter, have a care upon yourshelf: now they know you are dead, by my shoul they may kill you.

Herm. Would. Don't fear; none of his servants know me, and I'll take care to keep my face from his sight. It concerns me to conceal myself, till I know the engines of this contrivance.—Be sure you stay till I come to you; and let nobody know whom you belong to. [*Exit.*

Teague. Oh, ho, hon, poor Teague is left all alone! [*Sits on the portmantle.*

Enter SUBTLEMAN *and* CLEARACCOUNT.

Sub. And you won't swear to the will?

Clear. My conscience tells me I dare not do't with safety.

Sub. But if we make it lawful, what should you fear? We now think nothing against conscience, till the cause be thrown out of court.

Clear. In you, sir, 'tis no sin; because 'tis the principle of your profession: but in me, sir, 'tis downright perjury indeed. You can't want witnesses enough, since money won't be wanting, and you must lose no time; for I heard just now, that the true lord Wouldbe was seen in town, or his ghost.

Sub. It was his ghost, to be sure; for a nobleman without an estate is but the shadow of a lord. Well, take no care; leave me to myself; I'm near the Friars, and ten to one shall pick up an evidence.

Clear. Speed you well, sir! [*Exit.*

Sub. There's a fellow that has hunger and the gallows pictured in his face, and looks like my countryman.—How now, honest friend, what have you got under you there?

Teague. Noting, dear joy.

Sub. Nothing? is it not a portmantle?

Teague. That is noting to you.

Sub. The fellow's a wit.

Teague. Fet am I; my grandfader was an Irish poet. He did write a great book of verses concerning the vars between St. Patrick and the wolf-dogs.

Sub. Then thou art poor, I'm afraid?

Teague. Be me shoul, my sole generation ish so. I have noting but thish poor portmantle, and dat itshelf ish not my own.

Sub. Why, who does it belong to?

Teague. To my maishter, dear joy.

Sub. Then you have a master?

Teague. Fet I have, but he's dead.

Sub. Right! and how do you intend to live?

Teague. By eating, dear joy, fen I can get it, and by sleeping fen I can get none: 'tish the fashion of Ireland.

Sub. What was your master's name, pray?

Teague. [*Aside.*] I will tell a lee now; but it shall be a true one.—[*Aloud.*] Macfadin, dear joy, was his naam. He vent over vith king Jamish into France.—[*Aside.*] He was my master once. Deere ish de true lee noo.

Sub. What employment had he?

Teague. *Je ne sai pas.*

Sub. What, can you speak French?

Teague. Oui, monsieur, I did travel France, and Spain, and Italy. Dear joy, I did kish the pope's toe, and dat will excuse me all the sins of my life; and fen I am dead, St. Patrick will excuse the rest.

Sub. [*Aside.*] A rare fellow for my purpose!—[*Aloud.*] Thou lookest like an honest fellow; and if you'll go with me to the next tavern, I'll give thee a dinner, and a glass of wine.

Teague. Be me shoul, 'tis dat I wanted, dear joy; come along, I will follow you.

[*Runs out with the portmantle on his back,* SUBTLEMAN *following.*

Re-enter HERMES WOULDBE.

Herm. Would. My father dead! my birthright lost! How have my drowsy stars slept o'er my fortune?—Ha!—[*Looking about*] my servant gone! The simple, poor, ungrateful wretch has left me. I took him up from poverty and want; and now he leaves me just as I found him. My clothes and money too!—But why should I repine? Let man but view the dangers he has passed, and few will fear what hazards are to come. That Providence that has secured my life from robbers, shipwreck, and from sickness, is still the same; still kind whilst I am just. My death, I find, is firmly believed; but how it gained so universal credit I fain would learn.—Who comes here?—honest Mr. Fairbank! my father's goldsmith, a man of substance and integrity. The alteration of five years' absence, with the report of my death, may shade me from his knowledge, till I inquire some news.

Enter FAIRBANK.

Sir, your humble servant!

Fair. Sir, I don't know you. [*Shunning him.*

Herm. Would. I intend you no harm, sir; but seeing you come from my lord Wouldbe's house, I would ask you a question or two.—Pray what distemper did my lord die of?

Fair. I am told it was an apoplexy.

Herm. Would. And pray, sir, what does the world say? is his death lamented?

Fair. Lamented! my eyes that question should resolve; friend, thou knewest him not; else thy own heart had answered thee.

Herm. Would. [*Aside.*] His grief, methinks, chides my defect of filial duty.—[*Aloud.*] But, I hope, sir, his loss is partly recompensed in the merits of his successor.

Fair. It might have been; but his eldest son, heir to his virtue and his honour, was lately and unfortunately killed in Germany.

Herm. Would. How unfortunately, sir?

Fair. Unfortunately for him and us. I do remember him. He was the mildest, humblest, sweetest youth—

Herm. Would. [*Aside.*] Happy indeed had been my part in life if I had left this human stage whilst this so spotless and so fair applause had crowned my going off.—[*Aloud.*] Well, sir.

Fair. But those that saw him in his travels, told such wonders of his improvement, that the report recalled his father's years; and with the joy to hear his Hermes praised, he oft would break the chains of gout and age; and leaping up with strength of greenest youth, cry, *My Hermes is myself. Methinks I live my sprightly days again and I am young in him.*

Herm. Would. Spite of all modesty, a man must own a pleasure in the hearing of his praise. [*Aside.*

Fair. You're thoughtful, sir—had you any relation to the family we talk of?

Herm. Would. None, sir, beyond my private concern in the public loss.—But pray, sir, what character does the present lord bear?

Fair. Your pardon, sir. As for the dead, their memories are left unguarded, and tongues may touch them freely: but for the living, they have provided for the safety of their names by a strong inclosure of the law. There is a thing called *scandalum magnatum*, sir.

Herm. Would. I commend your caution, sir; but be assured I intend not to entrap you. I am a poor gentleman; and having heard much of the charity of the old lord Wouldbe, I had a mind to apply to his son; and therefore inquired his character.

Fair. Alas! sir, things are changed. That house was once what poverty might go a pilgrimage to seek, and have its pains rewarded. The noble lord, the truly noble lord, held his estate, his honour, and his house, as if they were only lent upon the interest of doing good to others. He kept a porter, not to exclude, but serve the poor. No creditor was seen to guard his going out, or watch his coming in: no craving eyes, but looks of smiling gratitude. But now, that family, which like a garden fairly kept invited every stranger to its fruit and shade, is now run o'er with weeds.—Nothing but wine and revelling within, a crowd of noisy creditors without, a train of servants insolently proud.—Would you believe it, sir, as I offered to go in just now, the rude porter pushed me back with his staff. I am at this present (thanks to Providence and my industry) worth twenty thousand pounds. I pay the fifth part of this to maintain the liberty of the nation; and yet this slave, the impudent Swiss slave, offered to strike me!

Herm. Would. 'Twas hard, sir, very hard: and if they used a man of your substance so roughly, how will they manage me, that am not worth a groat?

Fair. I would not willingly defraud your hopes of what may happen. If you can drink and swear; perhaps—

Herm. Would. I shall not pay that price for his lordship's bounty would it extend to half he's worth. Sir, I give you thanks for your caution, and shall steer another course.

Fair. Sir, you look like an honest, modest gentleman. Come home with me; I am as able to give you a dinner as my lord; and you shall be very welcome to eat at my table every day, till you are better provided.

Herm. Would. [*Aside.*] Good man!—[*Aloud.*] Sir, I must beg you to excuse me to-day: but I shall find a time to accept of your favours, or at least to thank you for 'em.

Fair. Sir, you shall be very welcome whenever you please. [*Exit.*

Herm. Would. Gramercy, citizen! Surely, if Justice were an herald, she would give this tradesman a nobler coat of arms than my brother.—But I delay: I long to vindicate the honour of my station, and to displace this bold usurper.—But one concern methinks is nearer still, my Constance! Should she, upon the rumour of my death, have fixed her heart elsewhere,—then I were dead indeed; but if she still proves true,—brother, sit fast.

I'll shake your strength, all obstacles remove,
Sustain'd by justice, and inspired by love. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—CONSTANCE'S *Apartment.*

CONSTANCE *and* AURELIA *discovered.*

Con. For Heaven's sake, cousin, cease your impertinent consolation! it but makes me angry, and raises two passions in me instead of one. You see I commit no extravagance, my grief is silent enough: my tears make no noise to disturb anybody. I desire no companion in my sorrows: leave me to myself and you comfort me.

Aur. But, cousin, have you no regard to your reputation?—This immoderate concern for a young fellow—what will the world say? You lament him like a husband.

Con. No, you mistake: I have no rule nor method for my grief; no pomp of black and darkened rooms; no formal month for visits on my bed. I am content with the slight mourning of a broken heart; and all my form is tears. [*Weeps.*

Enter MRS. MANDRAKE.

Mrs. Man. Madam Aurelia, madam, don't disturb her. Everything must have its vent. 'Tis a hard case to be crossed in one's first love. But you should consider, madam, [*To* CONSTANCE] that we are all born to die; some young, some old.

Con. Better we all died young, than be plagued with age as I am. I find other folks' years are as troublesome to us as our own.

Mrs. Man. You have reason, you have cause to mourn: he was the handsomest man, and the sweetest babe, that I know. Though I must confess too, that Ben had much the finer complexion when he was born. But then Hermes—O yes, Hermes had the shape, that he had! But of all the infants that I ever beheld with my eyes, I think Ben had the finest ear!—waxwork, perfect waxwork! And then he did so sputter at the breast! His nurse was a hale, well-complexioned, sprightly jade as ever I saw; but her milk was a little too stale, though, at the same time, 'twas as blue and clear as a cambric.

Aur. Do you intend all this, madam, for a consolation to my cousin?

Mrs. Man. No, no, madam, that's to come.—I tell you, fair lady, you have only lost the man; the estate and title are still your own; and this very moment I would salute you lady Wouldbe, if you pleased.

Con. Dear madam, your proposal is very tempting; let me but consider till to-morrow, and I'll give you an answer.

Mrs. Man. I knew it, I knew it! I said, when you were born, you would be a lady; I knew it! To-morrow, you say?—My lord shall know it immediately. [*Exit.*

Aur. What d'ye intend to do, cousin?

Con. To go into the country this moment, to be free from the impertinence of condolence, the persecution of that monster of a man, and that devil of a woman. O Aurelia, I long to be alone! I am become so fond of grief, that I would fly where I might enjoy it all, and have no interruption in my darling sorrow.

Enter HERMES WOULDBE *unperceived.*

Herm. Would. In tears! perhaps for me; I'll try. [*Drops a miniature, and retires behind, listening.*

Aur. If there be aught in grief delightful, don't grudge me a share.

Con. No, my dear Aurelia, I'll engross it all. I loved him so, methinks I should be jealous if any mourned his death besides myself. What's here!—[*Takes up the miniature.*] Ha! see, cousin—the very face and features of the man! Sure, some officious angel has brought me this for a companion in my solitude! Now I'm fitted out for sorrow! With this I'll sigh, with this converse, gaze on his image till I grow blind with weeping!

Aur. I'm amazed! how came it here?

Con. Whether by miracle or human chance, 'tis all alike; I have it here: nor shall it ever separate from my breast. It is the only thing could give me joy, because it will increase my grief.

Herm. Would. [*Coming forward.*] Most glorious woman! now I am fond of life.

Aur. Ha! what's this!—Your business, pray, sir?

Herm. Would. With this lady.—[*Goes to* CONSTANCE, *takes her hand, and kneels.*] Here let me worship that perfection whose virtue might attract the listening angels, and make 'em smile to see such purity, so like themselves in human shape!

Con. Hermes!

Herm. Would. Your living Hermes, who shall die yours too!

Con. [*Aside.*] Now passion, powerful passion, would bear me like a whirlwind to his arms!—But my sex has bounds.—[*Aloud.*] 'Tis wondrous, sir!

Herm. Would. Most wondrous are the works of fate for man; and most closely laid is the serpentine line that guides him into happiness! That hidden power which did permit those arts to cheat me of my birthright, had this surprise of happiness in store, well knowing that grief is the best preparative for joy.

Con. I never found the true sweets of love till this romantic turn.—Dead, and alive!—my stars are poetical! For Heaven's sake, sir, unriddle your fortune!

Herm. Would. That my dear brother must do; for he made the enigma.

Aur. Methinks I stand here like a fool all this while! would I had somebody or other to say a fine thing or two to me!

Herm. Would. Madam, I beg ten thousand pardons! I have my excuse in my hand.

Aur. My lord, I wish you joy!

Herm. Would. Pray, madam, don't trouble me with a title till I am better equipped for it. My peerage would look a little shabby in these robes.

Con. You have a good excuse, my lord: you can wear better when you please.

Herm. Would. I have a better excuse, madam: these are the best I have.

Con. How, my lord?

Herm. Would. Very true, madam; I am at present, I believe, the poorest peer in England.—Heark'ee, Aurelia, prithee lend me a piece or two.

Aur. Ha! ha! ha! poor peer indeed! he wants a guinea.

Con. I'm glad on't, with all my heart!

Herm. Would. Why so, madam?

Con. Because I can furnish you with five thousand.

Herm. Would. Generous woman!

Enter Captain TRUEMAN.

Ha, my friend too!

True. I'm glad to find you here, my lord. Here's a current report about town that you were killed. I was afraid it might reach this family; so I came to disprove the story by your letter to me by the last post.

Aur. I'm glad he's come; now it will be my turn, cousin. [*Aside.*

True. Now, my lord, I wish you joy; and I expect the same from you.

Herm. Would. With all my heart; but upon what score?

True. The old score—marriage.

Herm. Would. To whom?

True. To a neighbour lady here. [*Looking at* AURELIA.

Aur. [*Aside.*] Impudence!—[*Aloud.*] The lady mayn't be so near as you imagine, sir.

True. The lady mayn't be so near as you imagine, madam.

Aur. Don't mistake me, sir: I did not care if the lady were in Mexico.

True. Nor I neither, madam.

Aur. You're very short, sir!

True. The shortest pleasures are the sweetest, you know.

Aur. Sir, you appear very different to me from what you were lately.

True. Madam, you appear very indifferent to me to what you were lately.

Aur. Strange!

[*This while* CONSTANCE *and* WOULDBE *converse in dumb-show.*

True. Miraculous!

Aur. I could never have believed it.

True. Nor I, as I hope to be saved!

Aur. Ill manners!

True. Worse.

Aur. How have I deserved it, sir?

True. How have I deserved it, madam?

Aur. What?

True. You.

Aur. Riddles!

True. Women!—My lord, you'll hear of me at White's.—Farewell! [*Runs off.*

Herm. Would. What, Trueman gone?

Aur. Yes. [*Walks about in disorder.*

Con. Bless me! what's the matter, cousin?

Aur. Nothing.

Con. Why are you uneasy?

Aur. Nothing.

Con. What ails you then?

Aur. Nothing.—I don't love the fellow!—yet, to be affronted—I can't bear it!

[*Bursts out a-crying, and runs off.*

Con. Your friend, my lord, has affronted Aurelia.

Herm. Would. Impossible! his regard to me were sufficient security for his good behaviour here, though it were in his nature to be rude elsewhere. She has certainly used him ill.

Con. Too well rather.

Herm. Would. Too well! have a care, madam! That, with some men, is the greatest provocation to a slight.

Con. Don't mistake, my lord; her usage never went further than mine to you; and I should take it very ill to be abused for it.

Herm. Would. I'll follow him, and know the cause of it.

Con. No, my lord, we'll follow her, and know it. Besides, your own affairs with your brother require you at present. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Lord WOULDBE'S *House.*

BENJAMIN WOULDBE *and* SUBTLEMAN *discovered.*

Ben. Would. Returned! who saw him? who spoke with him?—He can't be returned.

Sub. My lord, he's below at the gate parleying with the porter, who has private orders from me to admit nobody till you send him word, that we may have the more time to settle our affairs.

Ben. Would. 'Tis a hard case, Mr. Subtleman, that a man can't enjoy his right without all this trouble.

Sub. Ay, my lord, you see the benefit of law now, what an advantage it is to the public for securing of property! Had you not the law o' your side, who knows what devices might be practised to defraud you of your right!—But I have secured all.—The will is in true form; and you have two witnesses already to swear to the last words of your father.

Ben. Would. Then you have got another?

Sub. Yes, yes, a right one; and I shall pick up another time enough before the term: and I have planted three or four constables in the next room to take care of your brother if he should be boisterous.

Ben. Would. Then you think we are secure?

Sub. Ay, ay; let him come now when he pleases. I'll go down, and give orders for his admittance. [*Exit.*

Ben. Would. Unkind brother! to disturb me thus, just in the swing and stretch of my full fortune! Where is the tie of blood and nature when brothers will do this? Had he but staid till Constance had been mine, his presence or his absence had been then indifferent.

Enter MRS. MANDRAKE.

Mrs. Man. Well, my lord,—[*Pants as out of breath.*] you'll ne'er be satisfied till you have broken my poor heart. I have had such ado yonder about you with madam Constance—but she's our own.

Ben. Would. How! my own! Ah, my dear helpmate, I'm afraid we are routed in that quarter: my brother's come home.

Mrs. Man. Your brother come home! then I'll go travel. [*Going.*

Ben. Would. Hold, hold, madam, we are all secure; we have provided for his reception; your nephew Subtleman has stopped up all passages to the estate.

Mrs. Man. Ay, Subtleman is a pretty, thriving, ingenious boy. Little do you think who is the father of him! I'll tell you;—Mr. Moabite the rich Jew in Lombard-street.

Ben. Would. Moabite the Jew!

Mrs. Man. You shall hear, my lord. One evening as I was very grave in my own house, reading the—*Weekly Preparation*—ay, it was the *Weekly Preparation*, I do remember particularly well—what hears me I—but pat, pat, pat, very softly at the door. Come in, cries I; and presently enters Mr. Moabite, followed by a snug chair, the windows close drawn, and in it a fine young virgin just upon the point of being delivered. We were all in a great hurly-burly for a while, to be sure; but our production was a fine boy. I had fifty guineas for my trouble, the lady was wrapped up very warm, placed in her chair, and reconveyed to the place she came from. Who she was, or what she was, I could never learn, though my maid said that the chair went through the Park—but the child was left with me. The father would have made a Jew on't presently, but I swore, if he committed such a barbarity on the infant, that I would discover all. So I had him brought up a good Christian, and bound prentice to an attorney.

Ben. Would. Very well!

Mrs. Man. Ah, my lord! there's many a pretty fellow in London that knows as little of their true father and mother as he does: I have had several such jobs in my time;—there was one Scotch nobleman that brought me four in half a-year.

Ben. Would. Four! and how were they all provided for?

Mrs. Man. Very handsomely indeed; they were two sons and two daughters, the eldest son rides in the first troop of guards, and the other is a very pretty fellow, and his father's valet-de-chambre.

Ben. Would. And what is become of the daughters, pray?

Mrs. Man. Why, one of 'em is a manteau-maker, and the youngest has got into the playhouse.—Ay, ay, my lord, let Subtleman alone, I'll warrant he'll manage your brother.—Ads my life, here's somebody coming! I would not be seen.

Ben. Would. 'Tis my brother, and he'll meet you upon the stairs; 'adso, get into this closet till he be gone. [*Shuts her into the closet.*

Re-enter SUBTLEMAN *with* HERMES WOULDBE.

My brother! dearest brother, welcome! [*Runs and embraces him.*

Herm. Would. I can't dissemble, sir, else I would return your false embrace.

Ben. Would. False embrace! still suspicious of me! I thought that five years' absence might have cooled the unmanly heats of our childish days. That I am overjoyed at your return, let this testify; this moment I resign all right and title to your honour, and salute you, lord.

Herm. Would. I want not your permission to enjoy my right; here I am lord and master without your resignation: and the first use I make of my authority, is, to discard that rude, bull-faced fellow at the door.—Where's my steward?

Enter CLEARACCOUNT.

Mr. Clearaccount, let that pampered sentinel below this minute be discharged.—Brother, I wonder you could feed such a swarm of lazy, idle drones about you, and leave the poor industrious bees, that fed you from their hives, to starve for want.—Steward, look to't; if I have not discharges for every farthing of my father's debts upon my toilet to-morrow-morning, you shall follow the tipstaff, I can assure you.

Ben. Would. Hold, hold, my lord, you usurp too large a power, methinks, o'er my family.

Herm. Would. Your family!

Ben. Would. Yes, my family: you have no title to lord it here.—Mr. Clearaccount, you know your master.

Herm. Would. How! a combination against me!—brother, take heed how you deal with one that, cautious of your falsehood, comes prepared to meet your arts, and can retort your cunning to your infamy. Your black, unnatural designs against my life, before I went abroad, my charity can pardon: but my prudence must remember to guard me from your malice for the future.

Ben. Would. Our father's weak and fond surmise! which he upon his death-bed owned: and to recompense me for that injurious, unnatural suspicion, he left me sole heir to his estate. Now, my lord, my house and servants are—at your service.

Herm. Would. Villany beyond example! Have I not letters from my father, of scarce a fortnight's date, where he repeats his fears for my return, lest it should again expose me to your hatred?

Sub. Well, well, these are no proofs, no proofs, my lord; they won't pass in court against positive evidence. Here is your father's will, *signatum et sigillatum*, besides his last words to confirm it, to which I can take my positive oath in any court of Westminster.

Herm. Would. What are you, sir?

Sub. Of Clifford's Inn, my lord; I belong to the law.

Herm. Would. Thou art the worm and maggot of the law, bred in the bruised and rotten parts, and now art nourished on the same corruption that produced thee. The English law, as planted first, was like the English oak, shooting its spreading arms around, to shelter all that dwelt beneath its shade: but now whole swarms of caterpillars, like you, hang in such clusters upon every branch, that the once thriving tree now sheds infectious vermin on our heads.

Ben. Would. My lord, I have some company above; if your lordship will drink a glass of wine, we shall be proud of the honour; if not, I shall attend you at any court of judicature, whenever you please to summon me. [*Going.*

Herm. Would. Hold, sir!—[*Aside.*] Perhaps my father's dying weakness was imposed on, and he has left him heir; if so, his will shall freely be obeyed.—[*Aloud.*] Brother, you say you have a will?

Sub. Here it is. [*Showing a parchment.*

Herm. Would. Let me see it.

Sub. There's no precedent for that, my lord.

Herm. Would. Upon my honour, I'll restore it.

Ben. Would. Upon my honour, but you shan't. [*Takes it from* SUBTLEMAN, *and puts it in his pocket.*

Herm. Would. This over-caution, brother, is suspicious.

Ben. Would. Seven thousand pound a year is worth looking after.

Herm. Would. Therefore you can't take it ill, that I am a little inquisitive about it.—Have you witnesses to prove my father's dying words?

Ben. Would. A couple in the house.

Herm. Would. Who are they?

Sub. Witnesses, my lord! 'tis unwarrantable to inquire into the merits of the cause out of court. My client shall answer no more questions.

Herm. Would. Perhaps, sir, upon a satisfactory account of his title, I intend to leave your client to the quiet enjoyment of his right, without troubling any court with the business; I therefore desire to know what kind of persons are these witnesses.

Sub. [*Aside.*] Oho, he's a coming about!—[*Aloud.*] I told your lordship already that I am one; another is in the house, one of my lord's footmen.

Herm. Would. Where is this footman?

Ben. Would. Forthcoming.

Herm. Would. Produce him.

Sub. That I shall presently.—[*Aside to* BENJAMIN WOULDBE.] The day's our own, sir.—[*To* HERMES WOULDBE.] But you shall engage first to ask him no cross questions.

Herm. Would. I am not skilled in such.—[*Exit* SUBTLEMAN.] But pray, brother, did my father quite forget me? left me nothing!

Ben. Would. Truly, my lord, nothing. He spoke but little; left no legacies.

Herm. Would. 'Tis strange! he was extremely just, and loved me too;—but perhaps—

Re-enter SUBTLEMAN *with* TEAGUE.

Sub. My lord, here's another evidence.

Herm. Would. Teague!

Ben. Would. My brother's servant!

[*They all four stare upon one another.*

Sub. His servant!

Teague. Maishter! see here, maishter, I did get all dish—[*Chinks money*] for being an evidensh, dear joy! an be me shoule, I will give the

half of it to you, if you will give me your permission to maake swear against you.

Herm. Would. My wonder is divided between the villany of the fact, and the amazement of the discovery! Teague! my very servant! sure I dream.

Teague. Fet, dere ish no dreaming in the cashe; I'm sure the croon pieceish are awake, for I have been taaking with dem dish half hour.

Ben. Would. Ignorant, unlucky man, thou hast ruined me! why had not I a sight of him before? [*Aside to* SUBTLEMAN.

Sub. I thought the fellow had been too ignorant to be a knave.

Teague. Be me shoule, you lee, dear joy. I can be a knave as well as you, fen I think it conveniency.

Herm. Would. Now, brother!—Speechless!—Your oracle too silenced!—Is all your boasted fortune sunk to the guilty blushing for a crime?—But I scorn to insult: let disappointment be your punishment.—But for your lawyer there—Teague, lay hold of him.

Sub. Let none dare to attach me without a legal warrant.

Teague. Attach! no, dear joy, I cannot attach you—but I can catch you by the troat, after the fashion of Ireland. [*Takes* SUBTLEMAN *by the throat.*

Sub. An assault! an assault!

Teague. No, no, 'tish nothing but choking, nothing but choking.

Herm. Would. Hold him fast, Teague.—[*To* BENJAMIN WOULDBE.] Now, sir, because I was your brother, you would have betrayed me; and because I am your brother I forgive it:—dispose yourself as you think fit. I'll order Mr. Clearaccount to give you a thousand pounds. Go take it, and pay me by your absence.

Ben. Would. I scorn your beggarly benevolence! had my designs succeeded, I would not have allowed you the weight of a wafer, and therefore will accept none.—As for that lawyer, he deserves to be pilloried, not for his cunning in deceiving you, but for his ignorance in betraying me. The villain has defrauded me of seven thousand pounds a year. Farewell— [*Going.*

Re-enter MRS. MANDRAKE, *and runs to* BENJAMIN WOULDBE.

Mrs. Man. [*Kneeling.*] My lord! my dear lord Wouldbe, I beg you ten thousand pardons!

Ben. Would. What offence hast thou done to me?

Mrs. Man. An offence the most injurious. I have hitherto concealed a secret in my breast to the offence of justice, and the defrauding your lordship of your true right and title. You, Benjamin Wouldbe, with the crooked back, are the eldest-born, and true heir to the estate and dignity.

All. How!

Teague. Arah, how?

Mrs. Man. None, my lord, can tell better than I, who brought you both into the world. My deceased lord, upon the sight of your deformity, engaged me, by a considerable reward, to say you were the last born, that the beautiful twin, likely to be the greater ornament to the family, might succeed him in his honour. This secret my conscience has long struggled with. Upon the news that you were left heir to the estate, I thought justice was satisfied, and I was resolved to keep it a secret still; but by strange chance, overhearing what passed just now, my poor conscience was racked, and I was forced to declare the truth.

Ben. Would. By all my forward hopes, I could have sworn it! I found the spirit of eldership in my blood; my pulses beat, and swelled for seniority.—Mr. Hermes Wouldbe,—I'm your most humble servant! [*Foppishly.*

Herm. Would. Hermes is my name, my Christian name; of which I am prouder than of all titles that honour gives, or flattery bestows. But thou, vain bubble, puffed up with the empty breath of that more empty woman; to let thee see how I despise thy pride, I'll call thee lord, dress thee up in titles like a king at arms; you shall be blazoned round, like any church in Holland; thy pageantry shall exceed the lord mayor's; and yet this Hermes, plain Hermes, shall despise thee.

Sub. Well, well, this is nothing to the purpose.—Mistress, will you make an affidavit of what you have said, before a master in Chancery?

Mrs. Man. That I can, though I were to die the next minute after it.

Teague. Den, dear joy, you would be dam the next minute after dat.

Herm. Would. All this is trifling: I must purge my house of this nest of villany at once.—Here, Teague!—[*Whispers* TEAGUE.] Go, make haste!

Teague. Dat I can.

[*As he runs out,* BENJAMIN WOULDBE *stops him.*

Ben. Would. Where are you going, sir?

Teague. Only for a pot of ale, dear joy, for you and my maishter, to drink friends.

Ben. Would. You lie, sirrah! [*Pushes him back.*

Teague. Fet, I do so.

Herm. Would. What! violence to my servant! Nay, then, I'll force him a passage. [*Draws.*

Sub. An assault! an assault upon the body of a peer!—Within there!

Enter Constables, *one of them with a black patch on his eye. They disarm* HERMES WOULDBE, *and secure* TEAGUE.

Herm. Would. This plot was laid for my reception.—Unhand me, Constable!

Ben. Would. Have a care, Mr. Constable, the man is mad; he's possessed with an odd frenzy, that he's my brother, and my elder too: so, because I would not very willingly resign my house and estate, he attempted to murder me.

Sub. Gentlemen, take care of that fellow: he made an assault upon my body, *vi et armis.*

Teague. Arah, fat is dat *wy at armish?*

Sub. No matter, sirrah; I shall have you hanged.

Teague. Hanged! dat is nothing, dear joy:—we are used to't.

Herm. Would. Unhand me, villains! or by all—

Teague. Have a caar, dear maishter, don't swear; we shall be had in the croon-offish.—You know dere ish sharpers about us.

[*Looking about on them that hold him.*

Ben. Would. Mr. Constable, you know your directions; away with 'em!

Herm. Would. Hold!—

Constab. No, no; force him away.

[*Exeunt all but* BENJAMIN WOULDBE, *and* MRS. MANDRAKE.

Ben. Would. Now, my dear prophetess, my sibyl, by all my dear desires and ambitions, I do believe you have spoken the truth!—I am the elder.

Mrs. Man. No, no, sir, the devil a word on't is true. I would not wrong my conscience neither; for, faith and troth, as I am an honest woman, you were born above three quarters of an hour after him;—but I don't much care if I do swear that you are the eldest.—What a blessing it was that I was in the closet at that pinch! Had I not come out that moment, you would have sneaked off; your brother had been in possession, and then we had lost all; but now you are established: possession gets you money, that gets you law, and law, you know—Down on your knees, sirrah, and ask me blessing.

Ben. Would. No, my dear mother, I'll give thee a blessing, a rent-charge of five hundred pound a year, upon what part of the estate you will, during your life.

Mrs. Man. Thank you, my lord: that five hundred a year will afford me a leisurely life, and a handsome retirement in the country, where I mean to repent me of my sins, and die a good Christian: for, Heaven knows, I am old, and ought to bethink me of another life.—Have you none of the cordial left that we had in the morning?

Ben. Would. Yes, yes, we'll go to the fountain-head. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Street.*

Enter TEAGUE.

Teague. Deel tauke me but dish ish a most shweet business indeed! Maishters play the fool, and shervants must shuffer for it. I am prishoner in the constable's house, be me shoule, and shent abrode to fetch some bail for my maishter; but foo shall fail poor Teague agra?

Enter CONSTANCE.

Oh, dere ish my maishter's old love. Indeed, I fear dish bishness will spoil his fortune.

Con. Who's here, Teague? [*He turns from her.*

Teague. [*Aside.*] Deel tauke her, I did tought she could not know me again.—[CONSTANCE *goes about to look him in the face. He turns from her.*] Dish ish not shivil, be me shoule to know a shentleman fither he will or no.

Con. Why this, Teague? what's the matter? are you ashamed of me, or yourself, Teague?

Teague. Of bote, be my shoule.

Con. How does your master, sir?

Teague. Very well, dear joy, and in prishon.

Con. In prison! how? where?

Teague. Why, in the little Bashtile yonder, at the end of the street.

Con. Show me the way immediately.

Teague. Fet, I can show you the house yonder: she yonder; be me shoule I she his faace yonder, peeping troo the iron glash window!

Con. I'll see him, though a dungeon were his confinement. [*Runs out.*

Teague. Ah! auld kindnesh, be my shoule, cannot be forgotten. Now, if my maishter had but grash enough to get her with child, her word would go for two; and she would bail him and I bote. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A meanly-furnished Room in a Spunging House.*

HERMES WOULDBE *is discovered sitting at a table writing.*

Herm. Would. The Tower confines the great,
The spunging house the poor;
Thus there are degrees of state
That even the wretched must endure.

Virgil, though cherish'd in courts,
Relates but a splenetic tale:
Cervantes revels and sports,
Although he writ in a jail.

Then hang reflections!—[*Starts up.*] I'll go write a comedy.—Ho, within there! Tell the lieutenant of the Tower that I would speak with him.

Enter Constable.

Constab. Ay, ay, the man is mad: lieutenant o'th' Tower! ha! ha! ha!—Would you could make your words good, master.

Herm. Would. Why, am not I a prisoner there? I know it by the stately apartments. What is that, pray, that hangs streaming down upon the wall yonder?

Constab. Yonder! 'tis cobweb, sir.

Herm. Would. 'Tis false, sir! 'tis as fine tapestry as any in Europe.

Constab. The devil it is!

Herm. Would. Then your damask bed, here; the flowers are so bold, I took 'em for embroidery; and then the headwork! *Pointe de Venise,* I protest.

Constab. As good Kidderminster as any in England, I must confess; and though the sheets be a little soiled, yet I can assure you, sir, that many an honest gentleman has lain in them.

Herm. Would. Pray, sir, what did those two Indian pieces cost, that are fixed up in the corner of the room.

Constab. Indian pieces! What the devil, sir, they are my old jack boots, my militia boots!

Herm. Would. I took 'em for two china jars, upon my word! But heark'ee, friend, art thou content that these things should be as they are?

Constab. Content! ay, sir.

Herm. Would. Why then should I complain?

Servant. [*Without.*] Mr. Constable, here's a woman will force her way upon us: we can't stop her.

Constab. Knock her down then, knock her down; let no woman come up, the man's mad enough already.

Enter CONSTANCE.

Con. Who dares oppose me? [*Throws him a handful of money.*

Constab. Not I truly, madam. [*Gathers up the money.*

Herm. Would. My Constance! my guardian angel here! Then naught can hurt me.

Constab. Heark'ee, sir, you may suppose the bed to be a damask bed for half an hour if you please.

Con. No, no, sir, your prisoner must along with me.

Constab. Ay, faith, the woman's madder than the man.

Enter Captain Trueman *and* Teague.

Herm. Would. Ha! Trueman too! I'm proud to think that many a prince has not so many true friends in his palace, as I have here in prison.—Two such—

Teague. Tree, be my shoule.

True. My lord, just as I heard of your confinement, I was going to make myself a prisoner. Behold the fetters! I had just bought the wedding ring.

Con. I hope they are golden fetters, captain?

True. They weigh four thousand pound, madam, besides the purse, which is worth a million.—My lord, this very evening was I to be married; but the news of your misfortune has stopped me: I would not gather roses in a wet hour.

Herm. Would. Come, the weather shall be clear; the thoughts of your good fortune will make me easy, more than my own can do, if purchased by your disappointment.

True. Do you think, my lord, that I can go to the bed of pleasure whilst you lie in a hovel?—Here, where is this constable? How dare you do this, insolent rascal?

Constab. Insolent rascal! do you know who you speak to, sir?

True. Yes, sirrah, don't I call you by your proper name? How dare you confine a peer of the realm?

Constab. Peer of the realm! you may give good words though, I hope.

Herm. Would. Ay, ay, Mr. Constable is in the right, he did but his duty; I suppose he had twenty guineas for his pains.

Constab. No, I had but ten.

Herm. Would. Heark'ee, Trueman, this fellow must be soothed, he'll be of use to us; I must employ you too in this affair with my brother.

True. Say no more, my lord, I'll cut his throat, 'tis but flying the kingdom.

Herm. Would. No, no, 'twill be more revenge to worst him at his own weapons. Could I but force him out of his garrison, that I might get into possession, his claim would vanish immediately. Does my brother know you?

True. Very little, if at all.

Herm. Would. Heark'ee. [*Whispers.*

True. It shall be done.—Look'ee, constable, you're drawn into a wrong cause, and it may prove your destruction if you don't change sides immediately. We desire no favour, but the use of your coat, wig, and staff, for half an hour.

Constab. Why truly, sir, I understand now, by this gentlewoman that I know to be our neighbour, that he is a lord, and I heartily beg his worship's pardon, and if I can do your honour any service, your grace may command me.

Herm. Would. I'll reward you.—But we must have the black patch for the eye too.

Teague. I can give your lordship wan; here fet, 'tis a plaishter for a shore finger, and I have worn it but twice.

Con. But pray, captain, what was your quarrel at Aurelia to-day?

True. With your permission, madam, we'll mind my lord's business at present; when that's done, we'll mind the lady's.—My lord, I shall make an excellent constable; I never had the honour of a civil employment before. We'll equip ourselves in another place.—Here, you Prince of Darkness, have you ne'er a better room in your house? these iron grates frighten the lady.

Constab. I have a handsome, neat parlour below, sir.

True. Come along then, you must conduct us.—[*Aside.*] We don't intend to be out of your sight, that you mayn't be out of ours. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—Aurelia's *Apartment.*

Enter Aurelia, Richmore *following.*

Aur. Follow me not! age and deformity, with quiet, were preferable to this vexatious persecution. For Heaven's sake, Mr. Richmore, what have I ever shown to vindicate this presumption of yours?

Rich. You show it now, madam; your face, your wit, your shape, are all temptations to undergo even the rigour of your disdain, for the bewitching pleasure of your company.

Aur. Then be assured, sir, you shall reap no other benefit by my company; and if you think it a pleasure to be constantly slighted, ridiculed, and affronted, you shall have admittance to such entertainment whenever you will.

Rich. I take you at your word, madam; I am armed with submission against all the attacks of your severity, and your ladyship shall find that my resignation can bear much longer than your rigour can inflict.

Aur. That is, in plain terms, your sufficiency will presume much longer than my honour can resist. Sir, you might have spared the unmannerly declaration to my face, having already taken care to let me know your opinion of my virtue, by your impudent settlement, proposed by Mrs. Mandrake.

Rich. By those fair eyes, I'll double the proposal! This soft, this white, this powerful hand—[*Takes her hand*] shall write its own conditions.

Aur. Then it shall write this—[*Strikes him*] and if you like the terms, you shall have more another time. [*Exit.*

Rich. Death and madness! a blow!—Twenty thousand pound sterling for one night's revenge upon her dear, proud, disdainful person!—Am I rich as many a sovereign prince, wallow in wealth, yet can't command my pleasure?—Woman!—If there be power in gold, I yet shall triumph o'er thy pride.

Enter Mrs. Mandrake.

Mrs. Man. O' my troth, and so you shall, if I can help it.

Rich. Madam, madam, here, here, here's money, gold, silver! take, take, all, all, my rings too! All shall be yours, make me but happy in this presumptuous beauty; I'll make thee rich as avarice can crave; if not, I'll murder thee, and myself too.

Mrs. Man. Your bounty is too large, too large indeed, sir.

Rich. Too large! no, 'tis beggary without her. Lordships, manors, acres, rents, tithes and trees, all, all shall fly for my dear sweet revenge!

Mrs. Man. Say no more, this night I'll put you in a way.

Rich. This night!

Mrs. Man. The lady's aunt is very near her time—she goes abroad this evening a-visiting; in

the mean time I send to your mistress, that her aunt is fallen in labour at my house: she comes in a hurry, and then—

Rich. Shall I be there to meet her?

Mrs. Man. Perhaps.

Rich. In a private room?

Mrs. Man. Mum.

Rich. No creature to disturb us?

Mrs. Man. Mum, I say; but you must give me your word not to ravish her; nay, I can tell you she won't be ravished.

Rich. Ravish!—Let me see, I'm worth five thousand pound a-year, twenty thousand guineas in my pocket, and may not I force a toy that's scarce worth fifteen hundred pound? I'll do't.

Her beauty sets my heart on fire; beside
The injurious blow has set on fire my pride;
The bare fruition were not worth my pain,
The joy will be to humble her disdain;
Beyond enjoyment will the transport last
In triumph when the ecstacy is past. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Lord Wouldbe's *House.*

Benjamin Wouldbe *discovered alone.*

Ben. Would. Show me that proud stoic that can bear success and champagne: philosophy can support us in hard fortune, but who can have patience in prosperity? The learned may talk what they will of human bodies, but I am sure there is not one atom in mine but what is truly epicurean. My brother is secured, I guarded with my friends, my lewd and honest midnight friends—Holla, who waits there?

Enter Footman.

Foot. My lord?

Ben. Would. A fresh battalion of bottles to reinforce the cistern. Are the ladies come?

Foot. Half an hour ago, my lord; they're below in the bathing-chamber.

Ben. Would. Where did you light on 'em?

Foot. One in the passage at the old playhouse, my lord—I found another very melancholy paring her nails by Rosamond's Pond,—and a couple I got at the Chequer ale-house in Holborn; the two last came to town yesterday in a west-country waggon.

Ben. Would. Very well, order Baconface to hasten supper; and, d'ye hear? and bid the Swiss admit no stranger without acquainting me.—[*Exit* Footman.] Now, Fortune, I defy thee; this night's my own at least.

Re-enter Footman.

Foot. My lord, here's the constable below with the black eye, and he wants to speak with your lordship in all haste.

Ben. Would. Ha! the constable!—Should Fortune jilt me now?—Bid him come up.—[*Exit* Footman.] I fear some cursed chance to thwart me.

Enter Captain Trueman, *disguised as a* Constable.

True. Ah! my lord, here is sad news—your brother is—

Ben. Would. Got away, made his escape, I warrant you.

True. Worse, worse, my lord.

Ben. Would. Worse, worse! what can be worse?

True. I dare not speak it.

Ben. Would. Death and hell, fellow, don't distract me!

True. He's dead.

Ben. Would. Dead!

True. Positively.

Ben. Would. *Coup de grace, ciel grandmerci!*

True. Villain, I understand you. [*Aside.*

Ben. Would. But, how, how, Mr. Constable? speak it aloud, kill me with the relation.

True. I don't know how; the poor gentleman was very melancholy upon his confinement, and so he desired me to send for a gentlewoman that lives hard by here: mayhap your worship may know her.

Ben. Would. At the gilt balcony in the square?

True. The very same, a smart woman truly. I went for her myself, but she was otherwise engaged; not she truly! she would not come. Would you believe it, my lord, at hearing of this the poor man was like to drop down dead.

Ben. Would. Then he was but likely to drop dead?

True. Would it were no more! Then I left him, and coming about two hours after, I found him hanged in his sword-belt.

Ben. Would. Hanged!

True. Dangling.

Ben. Would. *Le coup d'éclat!* done like the noblest Roman of 'em all!—But are you sure he's past all recovery? Did you send for no surgeon to bleed him?

True. No, my lord, I forgot that—but I'll send immediately.

Ben. Would. No, no, Mr. Constable, 'tis too late now, too late.—And the lady would not come, you say?

True. Not a step would she stir.

Ben. Would. Inhuman! barbarous!—dear, delicious woman, thou now art mine.—Where is the body, Mr. Constable? I must see it.

True. By all means, my lord, it lies in my parlour: there's a power of company come in, and among the rest one, one, one Trueman, I think they call him; a devilish hot fellow, he had like to have pulled the house down about our ears, and swears. I told him he should pay for his swearing, he gave me a slap in the face, said he was in the army, and had a commission for't.

Ben. Would. Captain Trueman? a blustering kind of rakehelly officer?

True. Ay, my lord, one of those scoundrels that we pay wages to for being knocked o' th' head for us.

Ben. Would. Ay, ay, one of those fools that have only brains to be knocked out.

True. [*Aside.*] Son of a whore!—[*Aloud.*] He's a plaguy impudent fellow, my lord; he swore that you were the greatest villain upon the earth.

Ben. Would. Ay, ay, but he durst not say that to my face, Mr. Constable.

True. No, no, hang him, he said it behind your back to be sure. And he swore, moreover,—have a care, my lord,—he swore that he would cut your throat whenever he met you.

Ben. Would. Will you swear that you heard him say so?

True. Heard him! ay, as plainly as you hear me: he spoke the very words that I speak to your lordship.

Ben. Would. Well, well, I'll manage him.—But now I think on't, I won't go see the body; it will but increase my grief. Mr. Constable, do you send for the coroner: they must find him *non compos.* He was mad before, you know. Here—something for your trouble. [*Gives money.*

True. Thank your honour.—But pray, my lord, have a care of that Trueman; he swears that he'll cut your throat, and he will do't, my lord, he will do't.

Ben. Would. Never fear, never fear.

True. But he swore it, my lord, and he will certainly do't. Pray have a care. [*Exit.*

Ben. Would. Well, well,—so,—the devil's in't if I ben't the eldest now. What a pack of civil relations have I had here! My father takes a fit of the apoplexy, makes a face, and goes off one way; my brother takes a fit of the spleen, makes a face, and goes off t'other way.—Well, I must own he has found the way to mollify me, and I do love him now with all my heart; since he was so very civil to justle into the world before me, I think he did very civilly to justle out of it before me.—But now my joys!—Without there—hollo!—Take off the inquisition of the gate; the heir may now enter unsuspected.

The wolf is dead, the shepherds may go play:
Ease follows care; so rolls the world away.

'Tis a question whether adversity or prosperity makes the most poets.

Re-enter Footman.

Foot. My lord, a footman brought this letter, and waits for an answer.

Ben. Would. Nothing from the Elysian fields, I hope.—[*Opening the letter.*] What do I see, *CONSTANCE!* Spells and magic in every letter of the name!—Now for the sweet contents.

My Lord,

I'm pleased to hear of your happy change of fortune, and shall be glad to see your lordship this evening to wish you joy.

CONSTANCE.

Now the devil's in this Mandrake! she told me this afternoon that the wind was chopping about; and has it got into the warm corner already?—Here, my coach-and-six to the door: I'll visit my sultana in state. As for the seraglio below stairs, you, my bashaws, may possess 'em.

[*Exit,* Footman *following.*

SCENE II.—*The Street before* Mrs. MANDRAKE'S *House.*

Enter TEAGUE *carrying a lantern,* Captain TRUEMAN *following, disguised as a* Constable.

True. Blockhead, thou hast led us out of the way; we have certainly passed the constable's house.

Teague. Be me shoule, dear joy, I am never out of my ways; for poor Teague has been a vanderer ever since he was borned.

True. Hold up the lantern.—What sign is that? the St. Albans tavern!—Why, you blundering fool, you have led me directly to St. James's Square, when you should have gone towards Soho.—[*Shrieking within.*] Hark! what noise is that over the way? a woman's cry!

Teague. Fet is it; shome daumsel in distress I believe, that has no mind to be relieved.

True. I'll use the privilege of my office to know what the matter is.

Teague. Hold, hold, maishter captain, be me fet, dat ish not the way home.

Aur. [*Within.*] Help! help! murder! help.

True. Ha! here must be mischief.—Within there, open the door in the king's name, or I'll force it open.—Here, Teague, break down the door.

[TEAGUE *takes the staff, thumps at the door.*

Teague. Deel tauke him, I have knock so long as I am able. Arah, maishter, get a great long ladder to get in the window of the firsht room, and sho open the door, and let in yourshelf.

Aur. [*Within.*] Help! help! help!

True. Knock harder; let's raise the mob.

Teague. O maishter, I have tink just now of a brave invention to maake dem come out; and be St. Patrick, dat very bushiness did maake my nown shelf and my fader run like de devil out of my nown hoose in my nown country:—be me shoule, set the hoose a-fire.

Enter Mob.

Mob. What's the matter, master constable?

True. Gentlemen, I command your assistance in the king's name to break into the house: there is murder cried within.

Mob. Ay, ay, break open the door.

Mrs. Man. [*From the balcony.*] What noise is that below?

Teague. Arah, vat noise ish dat above?

Mrs. Man. Only a poor gentlewoman in labour; 'twill be over presently.—Here, Mr. Constable; there's something for you to drink.

[*Throws down a purse,* TEAGUE *takes it up.*

Teague. Come, maishter, we have no more to shay, be me shoule.—[*Going.*] Arah, if you vill play the constable right now, fet you vill come away.

True. No, no; there must be villany by this bribe.—Who lives in this house?

Mob. A midwife, a midwife; 'tis none of our business: let us be gone.

Aur. [*Looking out at a window.*] Gentleman, dear gentleman, help!—A rape! a rape! villany!

True. Ha! that voice I know.—Give me the staff; I'll make a breach, I warrant you.

[*Breaks open the door, and enters,* TEAGUE *and* Mob *following.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* Mrs. MANDRAKE's *House.*

Enter Captain TRUEMAN *and* Mob.

True. Gentlemen, search all about the house; let not a soul escape.

Enter AURELIA *running, out of breath, and her hair dishevelled.*

Aur. Dear Mr. Constable—had you—staid but a moment longer—I had been ruined.

True. [*Aside.*] Aurelia!—[*Aloud.*] Are you safe, madam?

Aur. Yes, yes; I am safe—I think—but with enough ado: he's a devilish strong fellow.

True. Where is the villain that attempted it?

Aur. Psha!—never mind the villain;—look out the woman of the house, the devil, the monster, that decoyed me hither.

Enter TEAGUE, *haling in* Mrs. MANDRAKE *by the hair.*

Teague. Be me shoul, I have taaken my shaare of the plunder. Let me she fat I have gotten.—[*Takes her to the light.*] Ububboo, a witch! a witch! the very saame witch dat would swear my maishter was the youngest.

True. [*Aside.*] How! Mandrake! this was the luckiest disguise—[*Aloud.*] Come, my dear Proserpine, I'll take care of you.

Mrs. Man. Pray, sir, let me speak with you.

True. No, no; I'll talk with you before a magistrate.—A cart, Bridewell,—you understand me?—Teague, let her be your prisoner; I'll wait on this lady.

Aur. Mr. Constable, I'll reward you.

Teague. It ish convenient noo by the law of armsh, that I search my prishoner, for fear she may have some pocket-pishtols.—Dere is a joak for you! [*Searches her pockets.*

Mrs. Man. Ah! don't use an old woman so barbarously.

Teague. Dear joy, den fy vere you an old woman? dat is your falt, not mine, joy!—Uboo, here ish nothing but scribble-scrabble papers, I tink. [*Pulls out a handful of letters.*

True. Let me see 'em; they may be of use.—[*Looks over the letters.*] *For Mr. Richmore*—Ay! does he traffic hereabouts?

Aur. That is the villain that would have abused me.

True. [*Aside.*] Ha! then he has abused you? Villain indeed!—[*Aloud.*] Was his name Richmore, mistress? a lusty, handsome man?

Aur. Ay, ay, the very same: a lusty, ugly fellow.

True. Let me see—[*Opening a letter*] whose scrawl is this?—[*Aside.*] Death and confusion to my sight! Clelia, my bride, his whore!—I've passed a precipice unseen, which to look back upon, shivers me with terror.—This night, this very moment, had not my friend been in confinement, had not I worn this dress, had not Aurelia been in danger, had not Teague found this letter, had the least minutest circumstance been omitted, what a monster had I been!—[*Aloud.*] Mistress, is this same Richmore in the house still, think'ee?

Aur. 'Tis very probable he may.

True. Very well.—Teague, take these ladies over to the tavern, and stay there till I come to you.—[*To* AURELIA.] Madam, fear no injury; your friends are near you.

Aur. What does he mean? [*Aside.*

Teague. Come, dear joy, I vill give you a pot of wine out of your own briberies here.

[*Hales out* Mrs. MANDRAKE, AURELIA *and* Mob *following.*

Enter RICHMORE.

Rich. [*Aside.*] Since my money won't prevail on this cross fellow, I'll try what my authority can do.—[*Aloud.*] What's the meaning of this riot, constable? I have the commission of the peace, and can command you. Go about your business, and leave your prisoners with me.

True. No, sir; the prisoners shall go about their business, and I'll be left with you.—Look'ee, master, we don't use to make up these matters before company: so you and I must be in private a little.—You say, sir, that you are a justice of peace?

Rich. Yes, sir; I have my commission in my pocket.

True. I believe it.—Now, sir, one good turn deserves another: and, if you will promise to do me a kindness, why, you shall have as good as you bring.

Rich. What is it?

True. You must know, sir, there is a neighbour's daughter that I had a woundy kindness for. She had a very good repute all over the parish, and might have married very handsomely, that I must say; but, I don't know how, we came together after a very kindly, natural manner, and I swore, that I must say, I did swear confoundedly, that I would marry her; but, I don't know how, I never cared for marrying of her since.

Rich. How so?

True. Why, because I did my business without it: that was the best way, I thought. The truth is, she has some foolish reasons to say she's with child, and threatens mainly to have me taken up with a warrant, and brought before a justice of peace. Now, sir, I intend to come before you, and I hope your worship will bring me off.

Rich. Look'ee, sir, if the woman prove with child, and you swore to marry her, you must do't.

True. Ay, master; but I am for liberty and property. I vote for parliament men: I pay taxes, and, truly, I don't think matrimony consistent with the liberty of the subject.

Rich. But, in this case, sir, both law and justice will oblige you.

True. Why, if it be the law of the land—I found a letter here—I think it is for your worship.

Rich. Ay, sir; how came you by it?

True. By a very strange accident truly.—Clelia—she says here you swore to marry her. Eh!—Now, sir, I suppose that what is law for a petty-constable may be law for a justice of peace.

Rich. This is the oddest fellow—

True. Here was the t'other lady that cried out so—I warrant now, if I were brought before you for ravishing a woman—the gallows would ravish me for't.

Rich. But I did not ravish her.

True. That I'm glad to hear: I wanted to be sure of that. [*Aside.*

Rich. [*Aside.*] I don't like this fellow.—[*Aloud.*] Come, sir, give me my letter, and go

about your business; I have no more to say to you.

True. But I have something to say to you. [*Coming up to him.*

Rich. What?

True. Dog! [*Strikes him.*

Rich. Ha! struck by a peasant!—[*Draws.*] Slave, thy death is certain. [*Runs at* Captain TRUEMAN.

True. O brave Don John, rape and murder in one night! [*Disarms him.*

Rich. Rascal, return my sword, and acquit your prisoners, else will I prosecute thee to beggary. I'll give some pettifogger a thousand pound to starve thee and thy family according to law.

True. I'll lay you a thousand pound you won't. [*Discovering himself.*

Rich. Ghosts and apparitions! Trueman!

True. Words are needless to upbraid you: my very looks are sufficient; and, if you have the least sense of shame, this sword would be less painful in your heart than my appearance is in your eye.

Rich. Truth, by Heavens!

True. Think on the contents of this,—[*Showing a letter*] think next on me; reflect upon your villany to Aurelia, then view thyself.

Rich. Trueman, canst thou forgive me?

True. Forgive thee!—[*A long pause.*] Do one thing, and I will.

Rich. Anything:—I'll beg thy pardon.

True. The blow excuses that.

Rich. I'll give thee half my estate.

True. Mercenary!

Rich. I'll make thee my sole heir.

True. I despise it.

Rich. What shall I do?

True. You shall—marry Clelia.

Rich. How! that's too hard.

True. Too hard! why was it then imposed on me? If you marry her yourself, I shall believe you intended me no injury; so your behaviour will be justified, my resentment appeased, and the lady's honour repaired.

Rich. 'Tis infamous.

True. No, by Heavens, 'tis justice! and what is just is honourable: if promises from man to man have force, why not from man to woman? Their very weakness is the charter of their power, and they should not be injured because they can't return it.

Rich. Return my sword.

True. In my hand 'tis the sword of justice, and I should not part with it.

Rich. Then sheathe it here, I'll die before I consent so basely.

True. Consider, sir, the sword is worn for a distinguishing mark of honour: promise me one, and receive t'other.

Rich. I'll promise nothing, till I have that in my power.

True. Take it. [*Throws him his sword.*

Rich. I scorn to be compelled even to justice; and now, that I may resist, I yield. Trueman, I have injured thee, and Clelia I have severely wronged.

True. Wronged indeed, sir;—and, to aggravate the crime, the fair afflicted loves you. Marked you with what confusion she received me? She wept, the injured Innocence wept, and, with a strange reluctance, gave consent; her moving softness pierced my heart, though I mistook the cause.

Rich. Your youthful virtue warms my breast, and melts it into tenderness.

True. Indulge it, sir; justice is noble in any form: think of the joys and raptures will possess her when she finds you instead of me: you, the dear dissembler, the man she loves, the man she gave for lost, to find him true, returned, and in her arms.

Rich. No new possession can give equal joy.—It shall be done, the priest that waits for you shall tie the knot this moment; in the morning I'll expect you'll give me joy. [*Exit.*

True. So, is not this better now than cutting of throats? I have got my revenge, and the lady will have hers without bloodshed. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—CONSTANCE'S *Apartment.*

CONSTANCE *and* Footman *discovered.*

Foot. He's just a-coming up, madam. [*Exit.*

Con. My civility to this man will be as great a constraint upon me as rudeness would be to his brother: but I must bear it a little, because our designs require it.

Enter BENJAMIN WOULDBE.

—[*Aside.*] His appearance shocks me.—[*Aloud.*] My lord, I wish you joy.

Ben. Would. Madam, 'tis only in your power to give it; and would you honour me with a title to be really proud of, it should be that of your humblest servant.

Con. I never admitted anybody to the title of an humble servant, that I did not intend should command me; if your lordship will bear with the slavery, you shall begin when you please, provided you take upon you the authority when I have a mind.

Ben. Would. Our sex, madam, make much better lovers than husbands; and I think it highly unreasonable, that you should put yourself in my power, when you can so absolutely keep me in yours.

Con. No, my lord, we never truly command till we have given our promise to obey; and we are never in more danger of being made slaves, than when we have 'em at our feet.

Ben. Would. True, madam, the greatest empires are in most danger of falling; but it is better to be absolute there, than to act by a prerogative that's confined.

Con. Well, well, my lord, I like the constitution we live under; I'm for a limited power, or none at all.

Ben. Would. You have so much the heart of the subject, madam, that you may rule as you please; but you have weak pretences to a limited sway, where your eyes have already played the tyrant.—I think one privilege of the people is to kiss their sovereign's hand. [*Taking her hand.*

Con. Not till they have taken the oaths, my lord; and he that refuses them in the form the law prescribes, is, I think, no better than a rebel.

Ben. Would. [*Kneeling.*] By shrines and altars! by all that you think just, and I hold good! by

this, [*Taking her hand*] the fairest, and the dearest vow— [*Kisses her hand.*

Con. Fy, my lord! [*Seemingly yielding.*

Ben. Would. Your eyes are mine, they bring me tidings from your heart that this night I shall be happy.

Con. Would not you despise a conquest so easily gained?

Ben. Would. Yours will be the conquest, and I shall despise all the world but you.

Con. But will you promise to make no attempts upon my honour?

Ben. Would. [*Aside.*] That's foolish.—[*Aloud.*] Not angels sent on messages to earth shall visit with more innocence.

Con. [*Aside.*] Ay, ay, to be sure.—[*Aloud.*] My lord, I'll send one to conduct you. [*Exit.*

Ben. Would. Ha! ha! ha!—no attempts upon her honour! When I can find the place where it lies, I'll tell her more of my mind.—Now do I feel ten thousand Cupids tickling me all over with the points of their arrows.—Where's my deformity now? I have read somewhere these lines:—

Though Nature cast me in a rugged mould,
Since fate has changed the bullion into gold:
Cupid returns, breaks all his shafts of lead,
And tips each arrow with a golden head.
Feather'd with title, the gay lordly dart
Flies proudly on, whilst every virgin's heart
Swells with ambition to receive the smart.

Enter HERMES WOULDBE *behind him.*

Herm. Would. Thus to adorn dramatic story,
Stage-hero struts in borrow'd glory,
Proud and august as ever man saw,
And ends his empire in a stanza.
[*Slaps him on the shoulder.*

Ben. Would. Ha! my brother!

Herm. Would. No, perfidious man; all kindred and relation I disown! The poor attempts upon my fortune I could pardon, but thy base designs upon my love I never can forgive. My honour, birthright, riches, all I could more freely spare, than the least thought of thy prevailing here.

Ben. Would. How! my hopes deceived!—Cursed be the fair delusions of her sex! whilst only man opposed my cunning, I stood secure; but soon as woman interposed, luck changed hands, and the devil was immediately on her side.—Well, sir, much good may do you with your mistress, and may you love, and live, and starve together. [*Going.*

Herm. Would. Hold, sir! I was lately your prisoner, now you are mine; when the ejectment is executed, you shall be at liberty.

Ben. Would. Ejectment!

Herm. Would. Yes, sir, by this time, I hope, my friends have purged my father's house of that debauched and riotous swarm that you had hived together.

Ben. Would. Confusion!—Sir, let me pass; I am the elder, and will be obeyed. [*Draws.*

Herm. Would. Darest thou dispute the eldership so nobly?

Ben. Would. I dare, and will, to the last drop of my inveterate blood. [*They fight.*

Enter Captain TRUEMAN *and* TEAGUE.

True. [*Striking down their swords.*] Hold, hold, my lord! I have brought those shall soon decide the controversy.

Ben. Would. If I mistake not, that is the villain that decoyed me abroad.

[*Runs at* Captain TRUEMAN, TEAGUE *catches his arm behind, and takes away his sword.*

Teague. Ay, be me shoule, thish ish the besht guard upon the rules of fighting, to catch a man behind his back.

True. My lord, a word.—[*Whispers* HERMES WOULDBE.] Now, gentlemen, please to hear this venerable lady.

[*Goes to the door, and brings in* MRS. MANDRAKE.

Herm. Would. Mandrake in custody!

Teague. In my custody, fet.

True. Now, madam, you know what punishment is destined for the injury offered to Aurelia, if you don't immediately confess the truth.

Mrs. Man. Then I must own, (Heaven forgive me!)—[*Weeping*] I must own, that Hermes, as he was still esteemed, so he is the first-born.

Teague. A very honesht woman, be me shoule!

Ben. Would. That confession is extorted by fear, and therefore of no force.

True. Ay, sir; but here is your letter to her, with the ink scarce dry, where you repeat your offer of five hundred pound a year to swear in your behalf.

Teague. Dat was Teague's finding out, and, I believe, St. Patrick put it in my toughts to pick her pockets.

Enter CONSTANCE *and* AURELIA.

Con. I hope, Mr. Wouldbe, you will make no attempts upon my person.

Ben. Would. Damn your person!

Herm. Would. But pray, madam, where have you been all this evening? [*To* AURELIA.

Aur. Very busy, I can assure you, sir. Here's an honest constable that I could find in my heart to marry, had the greasy rogue but one drop of genteel blood in his veins; what's become of him? [*Looking about.*

Con. Bless me, cousin, marry a constable!

Aur. Why truly, madam, if that constable had not come in a very critical minute, by this time I had been glad to marry anybody.

True. I take you at your word, madam, you shall marry him this moment; and if you don't say that I have genteel blood in my veins by to-morrow morning—

Aur. And was it you, sir?

True. Look'ee, madam, don't be ashamed; I found you a little in the *déshabillé*, that's the truth on't, but you made a brave defence.

Aur. I am obliged to you; and though you were a little whimsical to-day, this late adventure has taught me how dangerous it is to provoke a gentleman by ill usage; therefore, if my lord and this lady will show us a good example, I think we must follow our leaders, captain.

True. As boldly as when honour calls.

Con. My lord, there was taken among your brother's jovial crew, his friend Subtleman, whom we have taken care to secure.

Herm. Would. For him the pillory.—For you, madam— [*To* MRS. MANDRAKE.

Teague. Be me shoule, she shall be married to maishter Fuller.

Herm. Would. For you, brother—

Ben. Would. Poverty and contempt—
To which I yield as to a milder fate,
Than obligations from the man I hate. [*Exit.*

Herm. Would. Then take thy wish.—And now, I hope, all parties have received their due rewards and punishments?

Teague. But what will you do for poor Teague, maishter?

Herm. Would. What shall I do for thee!—

Teague. Arah, maak me a justice of peash, dear joy.

Herm. Would. Justice of peace! thou art not qualified, man.

Teague. Yest, fet am I—I can take the oats, and write my mark—I can be an honesht man myshelf, and keep a great rogue for my clark.

Herm. Would. Well, well, you shall be taken care of.—And now, captain, we set out for happiness:—

Let none despair whate'er their fortunes be,
Fortune must yield, would men but act like me.
Choose a brave friend as partner of your breast,
Be active when your right is in contest;
Be true to love, and fate will do the rest.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE,

SPOKEN BY MRS. HOOK.

Our poet open'd with a loud warlike blast,
But now weak woman is his safest cast,
To bring him off with quarter at the last:
Not that he's vain to think that I can say,
Or he can write, fine things to help the play.
The various scenes have drain'd his strength and art;
And I, you know, had a hard struggling part:
But then he brought me off with life and limb;
Ah, would that I could do as much for him!—
Stay, let me think—your favours to excite,
I still must act the part I play'd to-night.
For whatsoe'er may be your sly pretence,
You like those best that make the best defence:
But this is needless—'tis in vain to crave it.
If you have damn'd the play, no power can save it.
Not all the wits of Athens, and of Rome;
Not Shakspeare, Jonson, could revoke its doom:
Nay, what is more—if once your anger rouses,
Not all the courted beauties of both houses.
He would have ended here—but I thought meet,
To tell him there was left one safe retreat,
Protection sacred, at the ladies' feet.
To that he answer'd in submissive strain,
He paid all homage to this female reign,
And therefore turn'd his satire 'gainst the men.
From your great queen this sovereign right ye draw,
To keep the wits, as she the world, in awe:
To her bright sceptre your bright eyes they bow;
Such awful splendour sits on every brow,
All scandal on the sex were treason now.
The play can tell with what poetic care
He labour'd to redress the injured fair,
And if you won't protect, the men will damn him there.
Then save the Muse, that flies to ye for aid;
Perhaps my poor request may some persuade,
Because it is the first I ever made.

THE RECRUITING OFFICER.

A Comedy.

Captique dolis, *donisque* coacti.
VIRGIL. Æneid. ii. 196.

TO ALL FRIENDS ROUND THE WREKIN.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—Instead of the mercenary expectations that attend addresses of this nature, I humbly beg, that this may be received as an acknowledgment for the favours you have already conferred. I have transgressed the rules of dedication in offering you anything in that style, without first asking your leave: but the entertainment I found in Shropshire commands me to be grateful, and that's all I intend.

'Twas my good fortune to be ordered some time ago into the place which is made the scene of this comedy; I was a perfect stranger to everything in Salop, but its character of loyalty, the number of its inhabitants, the alacrity of the gentlemen in recruiting the army, with their generous and hospitable reception of strangers.

This character I found so amply verified in every particular, that you made recruiting, which is the greatest fatigue upon earth to others, to be the greatest pleasure in the world to me.

The kingdom cannot show better bodies of men, better inclinations for the service, more generosity, more good understanding, nor more politeness, than is to be found at the foot of the Wrekin.

Some little turns of humour that I met with almost within the shade of that famous hill, gave the rise to this comedy; and people were apprehensive that, by the example of some others, I would make the town merry at the expense of the country-gentlemen. But they forgot that I was to write a comedy, not a libel; and that whilst I held to nature, no person of any character in your country could suffer by being exposed. I have drawn the justice and the clown in their *puris naturalibus;* the one an apprehensive, sturdy, brave blockhead; and the other a worthy, honest, generous gentleman, hearty in his country's cause, and of as good an understanding as I could give him, which I must confess is far short of his own.

I humbly beg leave to interline a word or two of the adventures of the Recruiting Officer upon the stage. Mr. Rich, who commands the company for which those recruits were raised, has desired me to acquit him before the world of a charge which he thinks lies heavy upon him, for acting this play on Mr. Durfey's third night.

Be it known unto all men by these presents, that it was my act and deed, or rather Mr. Durfey's; for he *would* play his third night against the first of mine. He brought down a huge flight of frightful birds upon me; when (Heaven knows!) I had not a feathered fowl in my play, except one single *Kite;* but I presently made *Plume* a bird, because of his name, and *Brazen* another, because of the feather in his hat; and with these three I engaged his whole empire, which I think was as great a *Wonder* as any *in the Sun.*

But to answer his complaints more gravely, the season was far advanced; the officers that made the greatest figures in my play were all commanded to their posts abroad, and waited only for a wind, which might possibly turn in less time than a day: and I know none of Mr. Durfey's birds that had posts abroad but his *Woodcocks,* and their season is over; so that he might put off a day with less prejudice than the Recruiting Officer could; who has this farther to say for himself, that he was posted before the other spoke, and could not with credit recede from his station.

These and some other rubs this comedy met with before it appeared. But on the other hand, it had powerful helps to set it forward. The Duke of Ormond encouraged the author, and the Earl of Orrery approved the play. My recruits were reviewed by my general and my colonel, and could not fail to pass muster; and still to add to my success, they were raised among my friends round the Wrekin.

This health has the advantage over our other celebrated toasts, never to grow worse for the wearing: 'tis a lasting beauty, old without age, and common without scandal. That you may live long to set it cheerfully round, and to enjoy the abundant pleasures of your fair and plentiful country, is the hearty wish of, my Lords and Gentlemen, your most obliged, and most obedient servant,

G. FARQUHAR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JUSTICE BALANCE, JUSTICE SCRUPLE, JUSTICE SCALE, } *three Justices of the Peace.*
MR. WORTHY, *a Gentleman of Shropshire.*
CAPTAIN PLUME, CAPTAIN BRAZEN, } *two Recruiting Officers.*
SERJEANT KITE, *Serjeant to* CAPTAIN PLUME.
BULLOCK, *a Country Clown, Brother to* ROSE.
COSTAR PEARMAIN, THOMAS APPLETREE, } *two Recruits,*
PLUCK, *a Butcher.*
THOMAS, *a Smith.*

MELINDA, *a Lady of fortune, beloved by* MR. WORTHY.
SILVIA, *Daughter to* JUSTICE BALANCE, *in love with* CAPTAIN PLUME.
LUCY, *Maid to* MELINDA.
ROSE, *a Country Girl, Sister to* BULLOCK.

Steward, Drummer, Recruits, Constables, Watch, Mob, Servants, &c. &c.

SCENE,—SHREWSBURY.

PROLOGUE.

In ancient times when Helen's fatal charms
Roused the contending universe to arms,
The Grecian council happily deputes
The sly Ulysses forth—to raise recruits.
The artful captain found, without delay,
Where great Achilles, a deserter, lay.
Him fate had warn'd to shun the Trojan blows:
Him Greece required—against their Trojan foes.
All the recruiting arts were needful here,
To raise this great, this timorous volunteer.
Ulysses well could talk: he stirs, he warms
The warlike youth.—He listens to the charms
Of plunder, fine laced coats, and glittering arms.
Ulysses caught the young aspiring boy,
And listed him who wrought the fate of Troy.
Thus by recruiting was bold Hector slain:
Recruiting thus fair Helen did regain.
If for one Helen such prodigious things
Were acted, that they even listed kings;
If for one Helen's artful, vicious charms,
Half the transported world was found in arms;
What for so many Helens may we dare,
Whose minds as well as faces are so fair?
If by one Helen's eyes old Greece could find,
Its Homer fired to write—even Homer blind;
The Britons sure beyond compare may write,
That view so many Helens every night.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Market Place.*

Enter, Drummer, *beating the "Grenadier's March,"* Serjeant Kite, Costar Pearmain, Thomas Appletree, *and* Mob, *following.*

Kite. [*Making a speech.*] If any gentlemen soldiers, or others, have a mind to serve her majesty, and pull down the French king: if any prentices have severe masters, any children have undutiful parents: if any servants have too little wages, or any husband too much wife: let them repair to the noble serjeant Kite, at the sign of the Raven in this good town of Shrewsbury, and they shall receive present relief and entertainment.—Gentlemen, I don't beat my drums here to ensnare or inveigle any man; for you must know, gentlemen, that I am a man of honour. Besides, I don't beat up for common soldiers; no, I list only grenadiers, grenadiers, gentlemen.—Pray, gentlemen, observe this cap. This is the cap of honour, it dubs a man a gentleman in the drawing of a tricker; and he that has the good fortune to be born six foot high, was born to be a great man.—[*To* Costar Pearmain.] Sir, will you give me leave to try this cap upon your head?

Pear. Is there no harm in't? won't the cap list me?

Kite. No, no, no more than I can.—Come, let me see how it becomes you?

Pear. Are you sure there be no conjuration in it? no gunpowder plot upon me?

Kite. No, no, friend; don't fear, man.

Pear. My mind misgives me plaguily.—Let me see it.—[*Going to put it on.*] It smells woundily of sweat and brimstone. Pray, serjeant, what writing is this upon the face of it?

Kite. The crown, or the bed of honour.

Pear. Pray now, what may be that same bed of honour?

Kite. Oh! a mighty large bed! bigger by half than the great bed of Ware—ten thousand people may lie in it together, and never feel one another.

Pear. My wife and I would do well to lie in't, for we don't care for feeling one another.—But do folk sleep sound in this same bed of honour?

Kite. Sound! ay, so sound that they never wake.

Pear. Wauns! I wish again that my wife lay there.

Kite. Say you so? then, I find, brother—

Pear. Brother! hold there, friend; I am no kindred to you that I know of yet. Look'ee, serjeant, no coaxing, no wheedling, d'ye see: if I have a mind to list, why so; if not, why 'tis not so: therefore take your cap and your brothership back again, for I an't disposed at this present writing.—No coaxing, no brothering me, faith!

Kite. I coax! I wheedle! I'm above it! sir, I have served twenty campaigns. But, sir, you talk well, and I must own that you are a man every inch of you, a pretty young sprightly fellow. I love a fellow with a spirit; but I scorn to coax, 'tis base: though I must say, that never in my life have I seen a better built man; how firm and strong he treads! he steps like a castle; but I scorn to wheedle any man.—Come, honest lad, will you take share of a pot?

Pear. Nay, for that matter, I'll spend my penny with the best he that wears a head, that is, begging your pardon, sir, and in a fair way.

Kite. Give me your hand then; and now, gentlemen, I have no more to say, but this—here's a purse of gold, and there is a tub of humming ale at my quarters: 'tis the queen's money, and the queen's drink.—She's a generous queen, and loves her subjects—I hope, gentlemen, you won't refuse the queen's health?

Mob. No, no, no!

Kite. Huzza then! huzza for the queen, and the honour of Shropshire!

Mob. Huzza!

Kite. Beat drum.

[*Exeunt,* Drummer *beating the "Grenadier's March."*

Enter Captain Plume.

Plume. By the Grenadier March, that should be my drum, and by that shout, it should beat with success.—Let me see—four o'clock.—[*Looking on*

his watch.] At ten yesterday morning I left London.—A hundred and twenty miles in thirty hours is pretty smart riding, but nothing to the fatigue of recruiting.

Re-enter Serjeant KITE.

Kite. Welcome to Shrewsbury, noble captain! From the banks of the Danube to the Severn side, noble captain, you're welcome!

Plume. A very elegant reception indeed, Mr. Kite! I find you are fairly entered into your recruiting strain: pray, what success?

Kite. I have been here but a week, and I have recruited five.

Plume. Five! pray what are they?

Kite. I have listed the strong man of Kent, the king of the gipsies, a Scotch pedlar, a scoundrel attorney, and a Welsh parson.

Plume. An attorney! wert thou mad? List a lawyer! Discharge him, discharge him this minute.

Kite. Why, sir?

Plume. Because I will have nobody in my company that can write; a fellow that can write, can draw petitions.—I say this minute discharge him.

Kite. And what shall I do with the parson?

Plume. Can he write?

Kite. Hum! he plays rarely upon the fiddle.

Plume. Keep him by all means.—But how stands the country affected? were the people pleased with the news of my coming to town?

Kite. Sir, the mob are so pleased with your honour, and the justices and better sort of people are so delighted with me, that we shall soon do our business.—But, sir, you have got a recruit here that you little think of.

Plume. Who?

Kite. One that you beat up for last time you were in the country: you remember your old friend Molly at the Castle?

Plume. She's not with child, I hope?

Kite. No, no, sir—she was brought to bed yesterday.

Plume. Kite, you must father the child.

Kite. And so her friends will oblige me to marry the mother!

Plume. If they should, we'll take her with us; she can wash, you know, and make a bed upon occasion.

Kite. Ay, or unmake it upon occasion. But your honour knows that I am married already.

Plume. To how many?

Kite. I can't tell readily—I have set them down here upon the back of the muster-roll.—[*Draws it out.*] Let me see,—*Imprimis*, Mrs. Sheely Snikereyes; she sells potatoes upon Ormond Key in Dublin—Peggy Guzzle, the brandy-woman at the Horse-guard at Whitehall—Dolly Waggon, the carrier's daughter at Hull—Mademoiselle Van-Bottomflat at the Buss.—Then Jenny Oakham, the ship-carpenter's widow, at Portsmouth; but I don't reckon upon her, for she was married at the same time to two lieutenants of marines, and a man-of-war's boatswain.

Plume. A full company!—You have named five—come, make 'em half-a-dozen, Kite. Is the child a boy or a girl?

Kite. A chopping boy.

Plume. Then set the mother down in your list, and the boy in mine: enter him a grenadier by the name of Francis Kite, absent upon furlough. I'll allow you a man's pay for his subsistence; and now go comfort the wench in the straw.

Kite. I shall, sir.

Plume. But hold; have you made any use of your German doctor's habit since you arrived?

Kite. Yes, yes, sir, and my fame's all about the country for the most famous fortune-teller that ever told a lie.—I was obliged to let my landlord into the secret, for the convenience of keeping it so; but he's an honest fellow, and will be trusty to any roguery that is confided to him. This device, sir, will get you men, and me money, which, I think, is all we want at present.—But yonder comes your friend Mr. Worthy.—Has your honour any farther commands?

Plume. None at present.—[*Exit* Serjeant KITE.] 'Tis indeed the picture of Worthy, but the life's departed.

Enter MR. WORTHY.

What! arms a-cross, Worthy! Methinks, you should hold 'em open when a friend's so near.—The man has got the vapours in his ears, I believe: I must expel this melancholy spirit.

Spleen, thou worst of fiends below,
Fly, I conjure thee by this magic blow.

[*Slaps* MR. WORTHY *on the shoulder.*

Wor. Plume! my dear captain, welcome. Safe and sound returned?

Plume. I 'scaped safe from Germany, and sound, I hope, from London; you see I have lost neither leg, arm, nor nose; then for my inside, 'tis neither troubled with sympathies nor antipathies; and I have an excellent stomach for roast-beef.

Wor. Thou art a happy fellow; once I was so.

Plume. What ails thee, man? No inundations nor earthquakes in Wales, I hope? Has your father rose from the dead, and reassumed his estate?

Wor. No.

Plume. Then you are married surely?

Wor. No.

Plume. Then you are mad, or turning quaker?

Wor. Come, I must out with it.—Your once gay, roving friend is dwindled into an obsequious, thoughtful, romantic, constant coxcomb.

Plume. And, pray, what is all this for?

Wor. For a woman.

Plume. Shake hands, brother; if you go to that, behold me as obsequious, as thoughtful, and as constant a coxcomb as your worship.

Wor. For whom?

Plume. For a regiment.—But for a woman!—'Sdeath! I have been constant to fifteen at a time, but never melancholy for one; and can the love of one bring you into this pickle? Pray, who is this miraculous Helen?

Wor. A Helen indeed, not to be won under a ten years' siege, as great a beauty, and as great a jilt.

Plume. A jilt! pho! is she as great a whore?

Wor. No, no.

Plume. 'Tis ten thousand pities. But who is she? do I know her?

Wor. Very well.

Plume. Impossible!—I know no woman that will hold out a ten years' siege.

Wor. What think you of Melinda?

Plume. Melinda! why, she began to capitulate

this time twelvemonth, and offered to surrender upon honourable terms; and I advised you to propose a settlement of five hundred pounds a year to her, before I went last abroad.

Wor. I did, and she hearkened to't, desiring only one week to consider: when, beyond her hopes, the town was relieved, and I forced to turn my siege into a blockade.

Plume. Explain, explain!

Wor. My lady Richly, her aunt, in Flintshire dies, and leaves her, at this critical time, twenty thousand pounds.

Plume. Oh, the devil! what a delicate woman was there spoiled! But, by the rules of war now, Worthy, your blockade was foolish. After such a convoy of provisions was entered the place, you could have no thought of reducing it by famine; you should have redoubled your attacks, taken the town by storm, or have died upon the breach.

Wor. I did make one general assault, and pushed it with all my forces; but I was so vigorously repulsed, that, despairing of ever gaining her for a mistress, I have altered my conduct, given my addresses the obsequious and distant turn, and court her now for a wife.

Plume. So as you grew obsequious, she grew haughty; and because you approached her as a goddess, she used you like a dog?

Wor. Exactly.

Plume. 'Tis the way of 'em all. Come, Worthy, your obsequious and distant airs will never bring you together; you must not think to surmount her pride by your humility. Would you bring her to better thoughts of you, she must be reduced to a meaner opinion of herself. Let me see; the very first thing that I would do, should be to lie with her chambermaid, and hire three or four wenches in the neighbourhood to report that I had got them with child. Suppose we lampooned all the pretty women in town, and left her out? Or, what if we made a ball, and forgot to invite her with one or two of the ugliest?

Wor. These would be mortifications, I must confess; but we live in such a precise, dull place, that we can have no balls, no lampoons, no—

Plume. What! no bastards! and so many recruiting officers in town! I thought 'twas a maxim among them to leave as many recruits in the country as they carried out.

Wor. Nobody doubts your good-will, noble captain, in serving your country with your best blood; witness our friend Molly at the Castle. There have been tears in town about that business, captain.

Plume. I hope Silvia has not heard of 't?

Wor. O sir, have you thought of her? I began to fancy you had forgot poor Silvia.

Plume. Your affairs had put my own quite out of my head. 'Tis true, Silvia and I had once agreed to go to bed together, could we have adjusted preliminaries; but she would have the wedding before consummation, and I was for consummation before the wedding; we could not agree. She was a pert, obstinate fool, and would lose her maidenhead her own way, so she may keep it for Plume.

Wor. But do you intend to marry upon no other conditions?

Plume. Your pardon, sir, I'll marry upon no conditions at all. If I should, I am resolved never to bind myself to a woman for my whole life, till I know whether I shall like her company for half an hour. Suppose I married a woman that wanted a leg! such a thing might be, unless I examined the goods beforehand. If people would but try one another's constitutions before they engaged, it would prevent all these elopements, divorces, and the devil knows what.

Wor. Nay, for that matter, the town did not stick to say, that—

Plume. I hate country towns for that reason. If your town has a dishonourable thought of Silvia it deserves to be burned to the ground. I love Silvia, I admire her frank, generous disposition. There's something in that girl more than woman, her sex is but a foil to her. The ingratitude, dissimulation, envy, pride, avarice, and vanity of her sister females, do but set off their contraries in her. In short, were I once a general I would marry her.

Wor. Faith, you have reason; for were you but a corporal she would marry you. But my Melinda coquettes it with every fellow she sees. I'll lay fifty pound she makes love to you.

Plume. I'll lay fifty pound that I return it, if she does. Look'ee, Worthy, I'll win her, and give her to you afterwards.

Wor. If you win her you shall wear her, faith; I would not give a fig for the conquest without the credit of the victory.

Re-enter Serjeant KITE.

Kite. Captain, captain, a word in your ear.

Plume. You may speak out, here are none but friends.

Kite. You know, sir, that you sent me to comfort the good woman in the straw, Mrs. Molly—my wife, Mr. Worthy.

Wor. O ho! very well! I wish you joy, Mr. Kite.

Kite. Your worship very well may, for I have got both a wife and a child in half an hour. But, as I was a-saying, you sent me to comfort Mrs. Molly, my wife I mean; but what d'ye think, sir? she was better comforted before I came.

Plume. As how!

Kite. Why, sir, a footman in a blue livery had brought her ten guineas to buy her baby-clothes.

Plume. Who, in the name of wonder, could send them?

Kite. Nay, sir, I must whisper that—Mrs. Silvia. [*Whispers.*

Plume. Silvia! generous creature!

Wor. Silvia! impossible!

Kite. Here be the guineas, sir; I took the gold as part of my wife's portion. Nay, farther, sir, she sent word that the child should be taken all imaginable care of, and that she intended to stand godmother. The same footman, as I was coming to you with this news, called after me, and told me, that his lady would speak with me. I went, and, upon hearing that you were come to town, she gave me half-a-guinea for the news; and ordered me to tell you, that justice Balance, her father, who is just come out of the country, would be glad to see you.

Plume. There's a girl for you, Worthy! Is there anything of woman in this? No, 'tis noble and generous, manly friendship. Show me another woman that would lose an inch of her prerogative, that way, without tears, fits, and reproaches! The common jealousy of her sex, which is nothing but their avarice of pleasure, she despises; and can

part with the lover, though she dies for the man. Come, Worthy: where's the best wine? for there I'll quarter.

Wor. Horton has a fresh pipe of choice Barcelona, which I would not let him pierce before, because I reserved the maidenhead of it for your welcome to town.

Plume. Let's away then.—Mr. Kite, wait on the lady with my humble service, and tell her I shall only refresh a little, and wait upon her.

Wor. Hold, Kite!—Have you seen the other recruiting-captain?

Kite. No, sir.

Plume. Another! who is he?

Wor. My rival in the first place, and the most unaccountable fellow—but I'll tell you more as we go. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—MELINDA'S *Apartment.*

Enter MELINDA *and* SILVIA *meeting.*

Mel. Welcome to town, cousin Silvia,—[*Salute.*] I envied you your retreat in the country; for Shrewsbury, methinks, and all your heads of shires, are the most irregular places for living. Here we have smoke, noise, scandal, affectation, and pretension; in short, everything to give the spleen—and nothing to divert it. Then the air is intolerable.

Silv. O madam! I have heard the town commended for its air.

Mel. But you don't consider, Silvia, how long I have lived in't! for I can assure you, that to a lady, the least nice in her constitution, no air can be good above half a year. Change of air I take to be the most agreeable of any variety in life.

Silv. As you say, cousin Melinda, there are several sorts of airs.

Mel. Psha! I talk only of the air we breathe, or more properly of that we taste. Have not you, Silvia, found a vast difference in the taste of airs?

Silv. Pray, cousin, are not vapours a sort of air? taste air! you might as well tell me, I may feed upon air. But prithee, my dear Melinda, don't put on such an air to me. Your education and mine were just the same; and I remember the time when we never troubled our heads about air, but when the sharp air from the Welsh mountains made our fingers ache in a cold morning at the boarding-school.

Mel. Our education, cousin, was the same, but our temperaments had nothing alike; you have the constitution of a horse.

Silv. So far as to be troubled with neither spleen, colic, nor vapours; I need no salts for my stomach, no hartshorn for my head, nor wash for my complexion; I can gallop all the morning after the hunting-horn, and all the evening after a fiddle. In short, I can do everything with my father, but drink, and shoot flying; and I am sure, I can do everything my mother could, were I put to the trial.

Mel. You are in a fair way of being put to't; for I am told your captain is come to town.

Silv. Ay, Melinda, he is come, and I'll take care he shan't go without a companion.

Mel. You are certainly mad, cousin!

Silv. *And there's a pleasure sure, in being mad,*
Which none but madmen know.

Mel. Thou poor romantic Quixote! Hast thou the vanity to imagine that a young sprightly officer, that rambles over half the globe in half a year, can confine his thoughts to the little daughter of a country-justice, in an obscure corner of the world?

Silv. Psha! what care I for his thoughts? I should not like a man with confined thoughts, it shows a narrowness of soul. Constancy is but a dull sleepy quality at best, they will hardly admit it among the manly virtues; nor do I think it deserves a place with bravery, knowledge, policy, justice, and some other qualities that are proper to that noble sex. In short, Melinda, I think a petticoat a mighty simple thing, and I am heartily tired of my sex.

Mel. That is, you are tired of an appendix to our sex, that you can't so handsomely get rid of in petticoats, as if you were in breeches. O' my conscience, Silvia, hadst thou been a man, thou hadst been the greatest rake in Christendom.

Silv. I should have endeavoured to know the world, which a man can never do thoroughly without half a hundred friendships, and as many amours. But now I think on't, how stands your affair with Mr. Worthy?

Mel. He's my aversion!

Silv. Vapours!

Mel. What do you say, madam?

Silv. I say, that you should not use that honest fellow so inhumanly. He's a gentleman of parts and fortune; and besides that he's my Plume's friend, and by all that's sacred, if you don't use him better, I shall expect satisfaction.

Mel. Satisfaction! you begin to fancy yourself in breeches in good earnest. But to be plain with you, I like Worthy the worse for being so intimate with your captain, for I take him to be a loose, idle, unmannerly coxcomb.

Silv. O madam! you never saw him, perhaps, since you were mistress of twenty-thousand pound; you only knew him when you were capitulating with Worthy for a settlement, which perhaps might encourage him to be a little loose, and unmannerly with you.

Mel. What do you mean, madam?

Silv. My meaning needs no interpretation, madam.

Mel. Better it had, madam; for methinks you are too plain.

Silv. If you mean the plainness of my person, I think your ladyship as plain as me to the full.

Mel. Were I sure of that, I would be glad to take up with a rakehelly officer as you do.

Silv. Again!—Look'ee, madam, you're in your own house.

Mel. And if you had kept in yours, I should have excused you.

Silv. Don't be troubled, madam, I shan't desire to have my visit returned.

Mel. The sooner therefore you make an end of this the better.

Silv. I am easily persuaded to follow my inclinations, so, madam, your humble servant. [*Exit.*

Mel. Saucy thing!

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. What's the matter, madam?

Mel. Did you not see the proud nothing, how she swells upon the arrival of her fellow?

Lucy. Her fellow has not been long enough arrived to occasion any great swelling, madam; I don't believe she has seen him yet.

Mel. Nor shan't if I can help it.—Let me see—I have it!—Bring me pen and ink.—Hold, I'll go write in my closet.

Lucy. An answer to this letter, I hope, madam. [*Presents a letter*.

Mel. Who sent it?

Lucy. Your captain, madam.

Mel. He's a fool, and I am tired of him. Send it back unopened.

Lucy. The messenger's gone, madam.

Mel. Then how shall I send an answer? Call him back immediately, while I go write.

[*Exeunt*.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Justice BALANCE'S *House*.

Enter Justice BALANCE *and* Captain PLUME.

Bal. Look'ee, captain, give us but blood for our money, and you shan't want men. I remember that for some years of the last war, we had no blood nor wounds, but in the officers' mouths; nothing for our millions but newspapers not worth a reading. Our armies did nothing but play at prison bars, and hide and seek with the enemy; but now ye have brought us colours, and standards, and prisoners. Ads my life, captain, get us but another mareschal of France, and I'll go myself for a soldier.

Plume. Pray, Mr. Balance, how does your fair daughter?

Bal. Ah, captain! what is my daughter to a mareschal of France? We're upon a nobler subject, I want to have a particular description of the battle of Hochstadt.

Plume. The battle, sir, was a very pretty battle as one should desire to see, but we were all so intent upon victory, that we never minded the battle. All that I know of the matter is, our general commanded us to beat the French, and we did so; and if he pleases but to say the word, we'll do't again. But pray, sir, how does Mrs. Silvia?

Bal. Still upon Silvia! For shame, captain! you are engaged already, wedded to the war; victory is your mistress, and 'tis below a soldier to think of any other.

Plume. As a mistress, I confess, but as a friend, Mr. Balance.

Bal. Come, come, captain, never mince the matter, would not you debauch my daughter if you could?

Plume. How, sir! I hope she's not to be debauched.

Bal. Faith, but she is, sir; and any woman in England of her age and complexion, by a man of your youth and vigour. Look'ee, captain, once I was young, and once an officer as you are; and I can guess at your thoughts now, by what mine were then; and I remember very well, that I would have given one of my legs to have deluded the daughter of an old plain country gentleman, as like me as I was then like you.

Plume. But, sir, was that country gentleman your friend and benefactor?

Bal. Not much of that.

Plume. There the comparison breaks: the favours, sir, that—

Bal. Pho, I hate speeches! If I have done you any service, captain, 'twas to please myself, for I love thee; and if I could part with my girl you should have her as soon as any young fellow I know. But I hope you have more honour than to quit the service, and she more prudence than to follow the camp; but she's at her own disposal, she has fifteen hundred pound in her pocket, and so—Silvia, Silvia! [*Calls*.

Enter SILVIA.

Silv. There are some letters, sir, come by the post from London; I left them upon the table in your closet.

Bal. And here is a gentleman from Germany.—[*Presents* Captain PLUME *to her*.] Captain, you'll excuse me, I'll go read my letters, and wait on you. [*Exit*.

Silv. Sir, you're welcome to England.

Plume. You are indebted to me a welcome, madam, since the hopes of receiving it from this fair hand was the principal cause of my seeing England.

Silv. I have often heard that soldiers were sincere, shall I venture to believe public report?

Plume. You may, when 'tis backed by private insurance: for I swear, madam, by the honour of my profession, that whatever dangers I went upon, it was with the hope of making myself more worthy of your esteem; and if ever I had thoughts of preserving my life, 'twas for the pleasure of dying at your feet.

Silv. Well, well, you shall die at my feet, or where you will; but you know, sir, there is a certain will and testament to be made beforehand.

Plume. My will, madam, is made already, and there it is; [*Gives her a parchment*.] and if you please to open that parchment, which was drawn the evening before the battle of Blenheim, you will find whom I left my heir.

Silv. [*Opens the will and reads*.] *Mrs. Silvia Balance*.—Well, Captain, this is a handsome and a substantial compliment; but I can assure you, I am much better pleased with the bare knowledge of your intention, than I should have been in the possession of your legacy. But methinks, sir, you should have left something to your little boy at the Castle.

Plume. [*Aside*.] That's home!—[*Aloud*.] My little boy! Lack-a-day, madam, that alone may convince you 'twas none of mine. Why the girl, madam, is my serjeant's wife, and so the poor creature gave out that I was father, in hopes that my friends might support her in case of necessity—that was all, madam.—My boy! no, no, no.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Madam, my master has received some ill news from London, and desires to speak with you

immediately, and he begs the captain's pardon, that he can't wait on him as he promised. [*Exit*.

Plume. Ill news! Heavens avert it, nothing could touch me nearer than to see that generous worthy gentleman afflicted. I'll leave you to comfort him, and be assured, that if my life and fortune can be any way serviceable to the father of my Silvia, she shall freely command both.

Silv. The necessity must be very pressing that would engage me to endanger either.

[*Exeunt severally*.

SCENE II.—*Another Room in the same*.

Justice BALANCE *and* SILVIA *discovered*.

Silv. Whilst there is life there is hope, sir; perhaps my brother may recover.

Bal. We have but little reason to expect it; doctor Kilman acquaints me here, that before this comes to my hands, he fears I shall have no son.—Poor Owen!—But the decree is just, I was pleased with the death of my father, because he left me an estate, and now I'm punished with the loss of an heir to inherit mine. I must now look upon you as the only hopes of my family, and I expect that the augmentation of your fortune will give you fresh thoughts, and new prospects.

Silv. My desire of being punctual in my obedience, requires that you would be plain in your commands, sir.

Bal. The death of your brother makes you sole heiress to my estate, which you know is about twelve hundred pounds a year. This fortune gives you a fair claim to quality and a title; you must set a just value upon yourself, and, in plain terms, think no more of captain Plume.

Silv. You have often commended the gentleman, sir.

Bal. And I do so still; he's a very pretty fellow; but though I liked him well enough for a bare son-in-law, I don't approve of him for an heir to my estate and family. Fifteen hundred pounds indeed I might trust in his hands, and it might do the young fellow a kindness; but, ods my life! twelve hundred pounds a year would ruin him—quite turn his brain! A captain of foot worth twelve hundred pounds a year! 'tis a prodigy in nature. Besides this, I have five or six thousand pounds in woods upon my estate; oh, that would make him stark mad! For you must know, that all captains have a mighty aversion to timber; they can't endure to see trees standing. Then I should have some rogue of a builder, by the help of his damned magic art, transform my noble oaks and elms into cornices, portals, sashes, birds, beasts, and devils, to adorn some magotty, new-fashioned bauble upon the Thames; and then you should have a dog of a gardener bring a *habeas corpus* for my *terra firma*, remove it to Chelsea or Twittenham, and clap it into grass-plats and gravel-walks.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, here's one below with a letter for your worship, but he will deliver it into no hands but your own.

Bal. Come, show me the messenger.

[*Exit with* Servant.

Silv. Make the dispute between love and duty, and I am prince Prettyman exactly. If my brother dies, ah poor brother! if he lives, ah poor sister! 'Tis bad both ways; I'll try again. Follow my own inclinations, and break my father's heart; or obey his commands, and break my own? worse and worse. Suppose I take it thus? a moderate fortune, a pretty fellow, and a pad; or a fine estate, a coach-and-six, and an ass. That will never do neither.

Re-enter Justice BALANCE *and* Servant.

Bal. [*To* Servant.] Put four horses into the coach.—[*Exit* Servant.] Silvia!

Silv. Sir.

Bal. How old were you when your mother died?

Silv. So young that I don't remember I ever had one; and you have been so careful, so indulgent to me since, that indeed I never wanted one.

Bal. Have I ever denied you anything you asked of me?

Silv. Never that I remember.

Bal. Then, Silvia, I must beg that, once in your life, you would grant me a favour.

Silv. Why should you question it, sir?

Bal. I don't; but I would rather counsel than command. I don't propose this with the authority of a parent, but as the advice of your friend; that you would take the coach this moment, and go into the country.

Silv. Does this advice proceed from the contents of the letter you received just now?

Bal. No matter; I shall be with you in three or four days, and then give you my reasons. But before you go, I expect you will make me one solemn promise.

Silv. Propose the thing, sir.

Bal. That you will never dispose of yourself to any man without my consent.

Silv. I promise.

Bal. Very well; and to be even with you, I promise that I will never dispose of you without your own consent; and so, Silvia, the coach is ready; farewell!—[*Leads her to the door, and returns*.] Now she's gone, I'll examine the contents of this letter a little nearer. [*Reads*.

Sir,

My intimacy with Mr. Worthy has drawn a secret from him that he had from his friend captain Plume; and my friendship and relation to your family oblige me to give you timely notice of it: the captain has dishonourable designs upon my cousin Silvia. Evils of this nature are more easily prevented than amended; and that you would immediately send my cousin into the country, is the advice of, sir, your humble servant,

MELINDA.

Why the devil's in the young fellows of this age! they are ten times worse than they were in my time. Had he made my daughter a whore, and forswore it like a gentleman, I could have almost pardoned it; but to tell tales beforehand is monstrous. Hang it, I can fetch down a woodcock or a snipe, and why not a hat and feather? I have a case of good pistols, and have a good mind to try.

Enter Mr. WORTHY.

Worthy, your servant.

Wor. I'm sorry, sir, to be the messenger of ill news.

Bal. I apprehend it, sir; you have heard that my son Owen is past recovery.

Wor. My advices say he's dead, sir.

Bal. He's happy, and I'm satisfied. The strokes of Heaven I can bear, but injuries from men, Mr. Worthy, are not so easily supported.

Wor. I hope, sir, you're under no apprehension of wrong from anybody?

Bal. You know I ought to be.

Wor. You wrong my honour, sir, in believing I could know anything to your prejudice without resenting it as much as you should.

Bal. This letter, sir, which I tear in pieces to conceal the person that sent it, informs me that Plume has a design upon Silvia, and that you are privy to't. [*Tears the letter.*

Wor. Nay then, sir, I must do myself justice, and endeavour to find out the author.—[*Takes up a fragment of the letter.*] Sir, I know the hand, and if you refuse to discover the contents—Melinda shall tell me. [*Going.*

Bal. Hold, sir! the contents I have told you already, only with this circumstance, that her intimacy with Mr. Worthy had drawn the secret from him.

Wor. Her intimacy with me!—Dear sir, let me pick up the pieces of this letter; 'twill give me such a hank upon her pride, to have her own an intimacy under her hand.—[*Gathering up the letter.*] 'Twas the luckiest accident! The aspersion, sir, was nothing but malice, the effect of a little quarrel between her and Mrs. Silvia.

Bal. Are you sure of that, sir?

Wor. Her maid gave me the history of part of the battle just now, as she overheard it. But I hope, sir, your daughter has suffered nothing upon the account?

Bal. No, no, poor girl; she's so afflicted with the news of her brother's death, that to avoid company she begged leave to be gone into the country.

Wor. And is she gone?

Bal. I could not refuse her, she was so pressing; the coach went from the door the minute before you came.

Wor. So pressing to be gone, sir! I find her fortune will give her the same airs with Melinda, and then Plume and I may laugh at one another.

Bal. Like enough; women are as subject to pride as we are, and why mayn't great women, as well as great men, forget their old acquaintance? But come, where's this young fellow? I love him so well, it would break the heart of me to think him a rascal.—[*Aside.*] I'm glad my daughter's gone fairly off though.—[*Aloud.*] Where does the captain quarter?

Wor. At Horton's; I'm to meet him there two hours hence, and we should be glad of your company.

Bal. Your pardon, dear Worthy; I must allow a day or two to the death of my son: the decorum of mourning is what we owe the world, because they pay it to us afterwards. I'm yours over a bottle, or how you will.

Wor. Sir, I'm your humble servant.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.—*A Street.*

Enter Serjeant KITE, *leading* COSTAR PEARMAIN *in one hand, and* THOMAS APPLETREE *in the other, both drunk.*

Serjeant KITE *sings.*

Our prentice Tom may now refuse
To wipe his scoundrel master's shoes;
For now he's free to sing and play—
Over the hills and far away.

Chorus. Over the hills, and over the main,
To Flanders, Portugal, or Spain:
The queen commands, and we'll obey—
Over the hills and far away.

We all shall lead more happy lives,
By getting rid of brats and wives,
That scold and brawl both night and day—
Over the hills and far away.

Chorus. Over the hills, &c.

Hey, boys! thus we soldiers live; drink, sing, dance, play! We live, as one should say—we live—'tis impossible to tell how we live. We are all princes. Why—why, you are a king—you are an emperor, and I'm a prince. Now—an't we—

Apple. No, serjeant, I'll be no emperor.

Kite. No!

Apple. No, I'll be a justice of peace.

Kite. A justice of peace, man!

Apple. Ay, wauns will I; for since this pressing act, they are greater than any emperor under the sun.

Kite. Done! you are a justice of peace, and you are a king, and I am a duke; and a rum duke, an't I?

Pear. Ay, but I'll be no king.

Kite. What then?

Pear. I'll be a queen.

Kite. A queen!

Pear. Ay, queen of England; that's greater than any king of 'em all.

Kite. Bravely said, faith! Huzza for the queen!—[*Huzza.*] But heark'ee, you Mr. Justice, and you Mr. Queen, did you ever see the queen's picture?

Both. No! no! no!

Kite. I wonder at that; I have two of 'em set in gold, and as like her majesty, God bless the mark!—See here, they are set in gold.

[*Takes two broad-pieces out of his pocket, and gives one to each.*

Apple. The wonderful works of Nature!

[*Looking at it.*

Pear. What's this written about? Here's a posy, I believe,—*Ca-ro-lus.*—What's that, serjeant?

Kite. Oh, Carolus!—Why, Carolus is Latin for queen Anne,—that's all.

Pear. 'Tis a fine thing to be a scollard!—Serjeant, will you part with this? I'll buy it on you, if it come within the compass of a crawn.

Kite. A crown! never talk of buying; 'tis the same thing among friends, you know; I present them to ye both: you shall give me as good a thing. Put 'em up, and remember your old friend, when I am—*Over the hills and far away!*

[They sing and put up the money.

Enter Captain PLUME, *singing.*

Plume. *Over the hills and over the main,*
To Flanders, Portugal, or Spain:
The queen commands, and we'll obey,
Over the hills and far away.

Come on, my men of mirth, away with it, I'll make one among ye.—Who are these hearty lads?

Kite. Off with your hats; 'ounds, off with your hats! This is the captain, the captain.

Apple. We have seen captains afore now, mun.

Pear. Ay, and lieutenant-captains too; flesh; I'se keep on my nab!

Apple. And I'se scarcely doff mine for any captain in England. My vether's a freeholder.

Plume. Who are these jolly lads, serjeant?

Kite. A couple of honest brave fellows, that are willing to serve the queen: I have entertained 'em just now as volunteers under your honour's command.

Plume. And good entertainment they shall have. Volunteers are the men I want, those are the men fit to make soldiers, captains, generals!

Pear. Wauns, Tummas, what's this! are you listed?

Apple. Flesh, not I: are you, Costar?

Pear. Wauns, not I!

Kite. What, not listed! Ha! ha! ha! a very good jest i'faith!

Pear. Come, Tummas, we'll go home.

Apple. Ay, ay, come.

Kite. Home! for shame, gentlemen, behave yourselves better before your captain! Dear Tummas, honest Costar—

Apple. No, no, we'll be gone.

Kite. Nay then, I command you to stay: I place you both sentinels in this place for two hours to watch the motion of St. Mary's clock, you; and you the motion of St. Chad's: and he that dares stir from his post till he be relieved, shall have my sword in his guts the next minute.

Plume. What's the matter, serjeant? I'm afraid you are too rough with these gentlemen.

Kite. I'm too mild, sir: they disobey command, sir, and one of 'em should be shot for an example to the other.

Pear. Shot, Tummas!

Plume. Come, gentlemen, what's the matter?

Pear. We don't know; the noble serjeant is pleased to be in a passion, sir—but—

Kite. They disobey command; they deny their being listed.

Apple. Nay, serjeant, we don't downright deny it neither; that we dare not do, for fear of being shot: but we humbly conceive in a civil way, and begging your worship's pardon, that we may go home.

Plume. That's easily known. Have either of you received any of the queen's money?

Pear. Not a brass farthing, sir.

Kite. Sir, they have each of them received three-and-twenty shillings and sixpence, and 'tis now in their pockets.

Pear. Wauns, if I have a penny in my pocket but a bent sixpence, I'll be content to be listed, and shot into the bargain!

Apple. And I. Look ye here, sir.

Pear. Ay, here's my stock too: nothing but the queen's picture, that the serjeant gave me just now.

Kite. See there, a broad-piece! three-and-twenty shillings and sixpence; t'other has the fellow on't.

Plume. The case is plain, gentlemen, the goods are found upon you. Those pieces of gold are worth three and-twenty and sixpence each.

[*Whispers* Serjeant KITE.

Pear. So it seems, that *Carolus* is three-and-twenty shillings and sixpence in Latin.

Apple. 'Tis the same thing in Greek, for we are listed.

Pear. Flesh, but we an't, Tummas!—I desire to be carried before the mayor, captain.

Plume. [*Aside to* KITE.] 'Twill never do, Kite—your damned tricks will ruin me at last.—I won't lose the fellows though, if I can help it.—[*Aloud.*] Well, gentlemen, there must be some trick in this: my serjeant offers here to take his oath that you are fairly listed.

Apple. Why, captain, we know that you soldiers have more liberty of conscience than other folks; but for me or neighbour Costar here, to take such an oath, 'twould be a downright perjuration.

Plume. [*To* KITE.] Look'ee, you rascal! you villain! if I find that you have imposed upon these two honest fellows, I'll trample you to death, you dog! Come, how was't?

Apple. Nay, then, we will speak. Your serjeant, as you say, is a rogue, begging your worship's pardon—and—

Pear. Nay, Tummas, let me speak; you know I can read.—And so, sir, he gave us those two pieces of money for pictures of the queen, by way of a present.

Plume. How! by way of a present! The son of a whore! I'll teach him to abuse honest fellows like you!—Scoundrel, rogue, villain!

[*Beats off* Serjeant KITE, *and follows.*

Both. O brave noble captain! Huzza! a brave captain, faith!

Pear. Now, Tummas, *Carolus* is Latin for a beating. This is the bravest captain I ever saw.—Wauns, I have a month's mind to go with him!

Re-enter Captain PLUME.

Plume. A dog, to abuse two such pretty fellows as you!—Look'ee, gentlemen, I love a pretty fellow: I come among you as an officer to list soldiers, not as a kidnapper, to steal slaves.

Pear. Mind that, Tummas.

Plume. I desire no man to go with me but as I went myself: I went a volunteer, as you, or you, may do; for a little time carried a musket, and now I command a company.

Apple. Mind that, Costar.—A sweet gentleman!

Plume. 'Tis true, gentlemen, I might take an advantage of you; the queen's money was in your pockets, my serjeant was ready to take his oath you were listed; but I scorn to do a base thing, you are both of you at your liberty.

Pear. Thank you, noble captain.—Ecod, I can't find in my heart to leave him, he talks so finely.

Apple. Ay, Costar, would he always hold in this mind.

Plume. Come, my lads, one thing more I'll tell you: you're both young tight fellows, and the army is the place to make you men for ever: every man has his lot, and you have yours. What think you now of a purse full of French gold out of a monsieur's pocket, after you have dashed out his brains with the but of your firelock, eh!

Pear. Wauns! I'll have it, captain—give me a shilling, I'll follow you to the end of the world.

Apple. Nay, dear Costar, do'na; be advised.

Plume. Here, my hero, here are two guineas for thee, as earnest of what I'll do farther for thee.

Apple. Do'na take it, do'na, dear Costar!
[*Cries, and pulls back his arm.*

Pear. I wull! I wull!—Wauns, my mind gives me, that I shall be a captain myself.—I take your money, sir, and now I am a gentleman.

Plume. Give me thy hand, and now you and I will travel the world o'er, and command wherever we tread.—[*Aside to* COSTAR PEARMAIN.] Bring your friend with you, if you can.

Pear. Well, Tummas, must we part?

Apple. No, Costar, I canno leave thee.—Come, captain, I'll e'en go along too; and if you have two honester simpler lads in your company, than we twa been, I'll say no more.

Plume. Here, my lad.—[*Gives him money.*] Now your name?

Apple. Tummas Appletree.

Plume. And yours?

Pear. Costar Pearmain.

Plume. Born where?

Apple. Both in Herefordshire.

Plume. Very well; courage, my lads!—Now we'll sing, *Over the hills and far away.* [Sings.

Courage, boys, 'tis one to ten,
But we return all gentlemen;
While conquering colours we display,
Over the hills and far away.
Over the hills, &c. [Exeunt singing.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Market-place.*

Enter Captain PLUME *and* Mr. WORTHY.

Wor. I cannot forbear admiring the equality of our two fortunes. We loved two ladies, they met us half way, and just as we were upon the point of leaping into their arms, fortune drops into their laps, pride possesses their hearts, a maggot fills their heads, madness takes 'em by the tails; they snort, kick up their heels, and away they run.

Plume. And leave us here to mourn upon the shore—a couple of poor melancholy monsters.—What shall we do?

Wor. I have a trick for mine; the letter, you know, and the fortune-teller.

Plume. And I have a trick for mine.

Wor. What is't?

Plume. I'll never think of her again.

Wor. No!

Plume. No; I think myself above administering to the pride of any woman, were she worth twelve thousand a year, and I han't the vanity to believe I shall ever gain a lady worth twelve hundred. The generous good-natured Silvia in her smock I admire, but the haughty scornful Silvia, with her fortune, I despise. [*Sings.*

Come, fair one, be kind;
You never shall find
A fellow so fit for a lover:
The world shall view
My passion for you,
But never your passion discover.

I still will complain
Of your frowns and disdain,
Though I revel through all your charms:
The world shall declare,
That I die with despair,
When I only die in your arms.

I still will adore,
And love more and more,
But, by Jove, if you chance to prove cruel,
I'll get me a miss
That freely will kiss,
Though I afterwards drink water-gruel.

What, sneak out o' town, and not so much as a word, a line, a compliment! 'Sdeath, how far off does she live? I'll go and break her windows.

Wor. Ha! ha! ha! ay, and the window-bars too to come at her. Come, come, friend, no more of your rough military airs.

Enter Serjeant KITE.

Kite. Captain! sir! look yonder, she's a-coming this way: 'tis the prettiest, cleanest, little tit!

Plume. Now, Worthy, to show you how much I am in love.—Here she comes; and what is that great country fellow with her?

Kite. I can't tell, sir.

Enter ROSE, *a basket on her arm, and* BULLOCK.

Rose. Buy chickens! young and tender! young and tender chickens!

Plume. Here, you chickens!

Rose. Who calls?

Plume. Come hither, pretty maid.

Rose. Will you please to buy, sir?

Wor. Yes, child, we'll both buy.

Plume. Nay, Worthy, that's not fair, market for yourself.—Come, child, I'll buy all you have.

Rose. Then all I have is at your sarvice.
[*Curtsies.*

Wor. Then I must shift for myself, I find.
[*Exit.*

Plume. Let me see; young and tender you say?
[*Chucks her under the chin.*

Rose. As ever you tasted in your life, sir.

Plume. Come, I must examine your basket to the bottom, my dear.

Rose. Nay, for that matter, put in your hand; feel, sir; I warrant my ware as good as any in the market.

Plume. And I'll buy it all, child, were it ten times more.

Rose. Sir, I can furnish you.

Plume. Come then, we won't quarrel about the price, they're fine birds.—Pray what's your name, pretty creature?

Rose. Rose, sir. My father is a farmer within three short mile o' the town; we keep this market; I sell chickens, eggs, and butter, and my brother Bullock there sells corn.

Bull. Come, sister, haste ye, we shall be leat a hoame. [*Whistles about the stage.*

Plume. Kite!—[*Tips him the wink, he returns it.*] Pretty Mrs. Rose—you have, let me see—how many?

Rose. A dozen, sir, and they are richly worth a crawn.

Bull. Come, Ruose, Ruose! I sold fifty strake o' barley to-day in half this time; but you will

higgle and higgle for a penny more than the commodity is worth.

Rose. What's that to you, oaf? I can make as much out of a groat as you can out of fourpence, I'm sure. The gentleman bids fair, and when I meet with a chapman I know how to make the best on him: and so, sir, I say, for a crawn-piece, the bargain's yours.

Plume. Here's a guinea, my dear.

Rose. I can't change your money, sir.

Plume. Indeed, indeed, but you can: my lodging is hard by, you shall bring home the chickens, and we'll make change there.

[*Goes off,* ROSE *follows him.*

Kite. So, sir, as I was telling you, I have seen one of these hussars eat up a ravelin for his breakfast, and afterwards pick his teeth with a palisado.

Bull. Ay, you soldiers see very strange things. But pray, sir, what is a ravelin?

Kite. Why, 'tis like a modern minced pie, but the crust is confounded hard, and the plums are somewhat hard of digestion.

Bull. Then your palisado, pray what may he be? —Come, Ruose, pray ha' done.

Kite. Your palisado is a pretty sort of bodkin, about the thickness of my leg.

Bull. [*Aside.*] That's a fib, I believe.—[*Aloud.*] Eh! where's Ruose? Ruose! Ruose! 'sflesh, where's Ruose gone?

Kite. She's gone with the captain.

Bull. The captain! wauns, there's no pressing of women, sure?

Kite. But there is, sir.

Bull. If the captain should press Ruose I should be ruined! Which way went she? Oh, the devil take your rablins and palisadoes! [*Exit.*

Kite. You shall be better acquainted with them, honest Bullock, or I shall miss of my aim.

Re-enter MR. WORTHY.

Wor. Why, thou art the most useful fellow in nature to your captain; admirable in your way, I find.

Kite. Yes, sir, I understand my business, I will say it.—You must know, sir, I was born a gipsy, and bred among that crew till I was ten year old. There I learned canting and lying. I was bought from my mother, Cleopatra, by a certain nobleman for three pistoles; who, liking my beauty, made me his page; there I learned impudence and pimping. I was turned off for wearing my lord's linen, and drinking my lady's ratafia; and then turned bailiff's follower: there I learned bullying and swearing. I at last got into the army, and there I learned whoring and drinking: so that if your worship pleases to cast up the whole sum, viz. canting, lying, impudence, pimping, bullying, swearing, whoring, drinking, and a halberd, you will find the sum total amount to a recruiting serjeant.

Wor. And pray, what induced you to turn soldier?

Kite. Hunger and ambition, the fears of starving, and hopes of a truncheon, led me along to a gentleman, with a fair tongue and a fair periwig, who loaded me with promises; but egad, it was the lightest load that ever I felt in my life. He promised to advance me, and indeed he did so—to a garret in the Savoy. I asked him why he put me in prison; he called me lying dog, and said I was in garrison; and, indeed, 'tis a garrison that may hold out till doomsday before I should desire to take it again. But here comes justice Balance.

Enter Justice BALANCE *and* BULLOCK.

Bal. Here, you serjeant, where's your captain? Here's a poor foolish fellow comes clamouring to me with a complaint that your captain has pressed his sister.—Do you know anything of this matter, Worthy?

Wor. Ha! ha! ha! I know his sister is gone with Plume to his lodging, to sell him some chickens.

Bal. Is that all? the fellow's a fool.

Bull. I know that, an't please you; but if your worship pleases to grant me a warrant to bring her before you, for fear of the worst.

Bal. Thou'rt mad, fellow, thy sister's safe enough.

Kite. I hope so too. [*Aside.*

Wor. Hast thou no more sense, fellow, than to believe that the captain can list women?

Bull. I know not whether they list them, or what they do with them, but, I am sure, they carry as many women as men with them out of the country.

Bal. But how came you not to go along with your sister?

Bull. Luord, sir, I thought no more of her going than I do of the day I shall die; but this gentleman here, not suspecting any hurt neither, I believe— [*To* KITE.] You thought no harm, friend, did ye?

Kite. Lackaday, sir, not I!—[*Aside.*] Only that, I believe, I shall marry her to-morrow.

Bal. I begin to smell powder.—Well, friend, but what did that gentleman with you?

Bull. Why, sir, he entertained me with a fine story of a great fight between the Hungarians, I think it was, and the Irish; and so, sir, while we were in the heat of the battle—the captain carried off the baggage.

Bal. Serjeant, go along with this fellow to your captain, give him my humble service, and I desire him to discharge the wench, though he has listed her.

Bull. Ay, and if he ben't free for that, he shall have another man in her place.

Kite. Come, honest friend—[*Aside.*] You shall go to my quarters instead of the captain's.

[*Exit with* BULLOCK.

Bal. We must get this mad captain his complement of men, and send him a-packing, else he'll overrun the country.

Wor. You see, sir, how little he values your daughter's disdain!

Bal. I like him the better; I was just such another fellow at his age. I never set my heart upon any woman so much as to make myself uneasy at the disappointment; but what was very surprising both to myself and friends, I changed o'th' sudden, from the most fickle lover to the most constant husband in the world. But how goes your affair with Melinda?

Wor. Very slowly. Cupid had formerly wings, but I think, in this age, he goes upon crutches; or, I fancy Venus has been dallying with her cripple Vulcan when my amour commenced, which has made it go on so lamely; my mistress has got a captain too, but such a captain! As I live, yonder he comes!

Bal. Who? that bluff fellow in the sash! I don't know him.

Wor. But I engage he knows you, and everybody at first sight: his impudence were a prodigy, were not his ignorance proportionable. He has the most universal acquaintance of any man living; for he won't be alone, and nobody will keep him company twice. Then he's a Cæsar among the women, *Veni, vidi, vici*, that's all: if he has but talked with the maid, he swears he has lain with the mistress. But the most surprising part of his character is his memory, which is the most prodigious and the most trifling in the world.

Bal. I have met with such men; and I take this good-for-nothing memory to proceed from a certain contexture of the brain, which is purely adapted to impertinencies, and there they lodge secure, the owner having no thoughts of his own to disturb them. I have known a man as perfect as a chronologer, as to the day and year of most important transactions, but be altogether ignorant of the causes, springs, or consequences of any one thing of moment. I have known another acquire so much by travel, as to tell you the names of most places in Europe, with their distances of miles, leagues, or hours, as punctually as a postboy; but for anything else, as ignorant as the horse that carries the mail.

Wor. This is your man, sir, add but the traveller's privilege of lying; and even that he abuses. This is the picture, behold the life!

Enter Captain BRAZEN.

Braz. Mr. Worthy, I am your servant, and so forth.—Heark'ee, my dear.

Wor. Whispering, sir, before company is not manners, and when nobody's by 'tis foolish.

Braz. Company! *Mort de ma vie!* I beg the gentleman's pardon; who is he?

Wor. Ask him.

Braz. So I will.—My dear, I am your servant, and so forth—your name, my dear?

Bal. Very laconic, sir!

Braz. Laconic! a very good name, truly; I have known several of the Laconics abroad.—Poor Jack Laconic! he was killed at the battle of Landen. I remember that he had a blue ribbon in his hat that very day, and after he fell, we found a piece of neat's tongue in his pocket.

Bal. Pray, sir, did the French attack us, or we them, at Landen?

Braz. The French attack us! Oons, sir, are you a Jacobite?

Bal. Why that question?

Braz. Because none but a Jacobite could think that the French durst attack us. No, sir, we attacked them on the—I have reason to remember the time, for I had two-and-twenty horses killed under me that day.

Wor. Then, sir, you must have rid mighty hard.

Bal. Or perhaps, sir, like my countryman, you rid upon half-a-dozen horses at once.

Braz. What do you mean, gentlemen? I tell you they were killed, all torn to pieces by cannon-shot, except six I staked to death upon the enemies *chevaux-de-frise*.

Bal. Noble captain, may I crave your name!

Braz. Brazen, at your service.

Bal. Oh, Brazen, a very good name; I have know several of the Brazens abroad.

Wor. Do you know captain Plume, sir?

Braz. Is he anything related to Frank Plume in Northamptonshire?—Honest Frank! many, many a dry bottle have we cracked hand to fist. You must have known his brother Charles that was concerned in the India company, he married the daughter of old Tonguepad, the master in chancery, a very pretty woman, only squinted a little. She died in childbed of her first child; but the child survived, 'twas a daughter, but whether 'twas called Margaret or Margery, upon my soul, I can't remember.—[*Looking on his watch.*] But, gentlemen, I must meet a lady, a twenty thousand pounder, presently, upon the walk by the water.—Worthy, your servant.—Laconic, yours. [*Exit.*

Bal. If you can have so mean an opinion of Melinda as to be jealous of this fellow, I think she ought to give you cause to be so.

Wor. I don't think she encourages him so much for gaining herself a lover, as to set me up a rival. Were there any credit to be given to his words, I should believe Melinda had made him this assignation. I must go see; sir, you'll pardon me.

Bal. Ay, ay, sir, you're a man of business.—[*Exit* Mr. WORTHY.] But what have we got here?

Re-enter ROSE, *singing.*

Rose. And I shall be a lady, a captain's lady and ride single upon a white horse with a star, upon a velvet side-saddle; and I shall go to London, and see the tombs, and the lions, and the queen.—Sir, an please your worship, I have often seen your worship ride through our grounds a-hunting, begging your worship's pardon—pray what may this lace be worth a yard? [*Showing some lace.*

Bal. Right Mechlin, by this light! Where did you get this lace, child?

Rose. No matter for that, sir, I came honestly by it.

Bal. I question it much.

Rose. And see here, sir, a fine Turkey-shell snuff-box, and fine mangery, see here.—[*Takes snuff affectedly.*] The captain learned me how to take it with an air.

Bal. Oho! the captain! now the murder's out. And so the captain taught you to take it with an air?

Rose. Yes, and give it with an air too.—Will your worship please to taste my snuff?

[*Offers the box affectedly.*

Bal. You are a very apt scholar, pretty maid. And pray, what did you give the captain for these fine things?

Rose. He's to have my brother for a soldier, and two or three sweethearts that I have in the country, they shall all go with the captain. Oh, he's the finest man, and the humblest withal! Would you believe it, sir, he carried me up with him to his own chamber, with as much fam-mam-mill-yara-rality as if I had been the best lady in the land!

Bal. Oh! he's a mighty familiar gentleman, as can be.

Rose. But I must beg your worship's pardon, I must go seek out my brother Bullock.

[*Runs off singing.*

Bal. If all officers took the same method of recruiting with this gentleman, they might come in time to be fathers as well as captains of their companies.

Re-enter Captain Plume *singing, with his arm round* Rose.

Plume. *But it is not so*
With those that go,
Through frost and snow.
Most apropos,
My maid with the milking-pail.

—[*Aside.*] How, the justice! then I'm arraigned, condemned, and executed.

Bal. Oh, my noble captain!

Rose. And my noble captain too, sir.

Plume. [*Aside to* Rose.] 'Sdeath, child! are you mad?—[*Aloud.*] Mr. Balance, I am so full of business about my recruits, that I han't a moment's time to—I have just now three or four people to—

Bal. Nay, captain, I must speak to you.

Rose. And so must I too, captain.

Plume. Any other time, sir—I cannot for my life, sir—

Bal. Pray, sir—

Plume. Twenty thousand things—I would—but now, sir, pray—devil take me—I cannot—I must— [*Breaks away.*

Bal. Nay, I'll follow you. [*Exit.*

Rose. And I too. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Walk by the Severn.*

Enter Melinda *and* Lucy.

Mel. And pray, was it a ring, or buckle, or pendants, or knots? or, in what shape was the almighty gold transformed, that has bribed you so much in his favour?

Lucy. Indeed, madam, the last bribe I had was from the captain, and that was only a small piece of Flanders edging for pinners.

Mel. Ay, Flanders lace is as constant a present from officers to their women, as something else is from their women to them. They every year bring over a cargo of lace, to cheat the queen of her duty, and her subjects of their honesty.

Lucy. They only barter one sort of prohibited goods for another, madam.

Mel. Has any of 'em been bartering with you, Mrs. Pert, that you talk so like a trader?

Lucy. Madam, you talk as peevishly to me, as if it were my fault; the crime is none of mine, though I pretend to excuse it: though he should not see you this week, can I help it? But as I was saying, madam—his friend, captain Plume, has so taken him up these two days.

Mel. Psha! would his friend, the captain, were tied upon his back! I warrant, he has never been sober since that confounded captain came to town. The devil take all officers, I say! they do the nation more harm by debauching us at home, than they do good by defending us abroad. No sooner a captain comes to town, but all the young fellows flock about him, and we can't keep a man to ourselves.

Lucy. One would imagine, madam, by your concern for Worthy's absence, that you should use him better when he's with you.

Mel. Who told you, pray, that I was concerned for his absence? I'm only vexed that I've had nothing said to me these two days. One may like the love, and despise the lover, I hope; as one may love the treason, and hate the traitor. Oh, here comes another captain, and a rogue that has the confidence to make love to me; but, indeed, I don't wonder at that, when he has the assurance to fancy himself a fine gentleman.

Lucy. If he should speak o' th' assignation, I should be ruined. [*Aside.*

Enter Captain Brazen.

Braz. [*Aside.*] True to the touch, faith!—[*Aloud.*] Madam, I am your humble servant, and all that, madam.—A fine river this same Severn.—Do you love fishing, madam?

Mel. 'Tis a pretty melancholy amusement for lovers.

Braz. I'll go buy hooks and lines presently; for you must know, madam, that I have served in Flanders against the French, in Hungary against the Turks, and in Tangier against the Moors, and I was never so much in love before; and split me, madam, in all the campaigns I ever made, I have not seen so fine a woman as your ladyship.

Mel. And from all the men I ever saw, I never had so fine a compliment; but you soldiers are the best bred men, that we must allow.

Braz. Some of us, madam.—But there are brutes among us too, very sad brutes; for my own part, I have always had the good luck to prove agreeable.—I have had very considerable offers, madam—I might have married a German princess, worth fifty thousand crowns a year, but her stove disgusted me.—The daughter of a Turkish bashaw fell in love with me too, when I was prisoner among the Infidels; she offered to rob her father of his treasure, and make her escape with me; but I don't know how, my time was not come; hanging and marriage, you know, go by destiny; fate has reserved me for a Shropshire lady with twenty thousand pound.—Do you know any such person, madam?

Mel. [*Aside.*] Extravagant coxcomb!—[*Aloud.*] To be sure, a great many ladies of that fortune would be proud of the name of Mrs. Brazen.

Braz. Nay, for that matter, madam, there are women of very good quality of the name of Brazen.

Enter Mr. Worthy.

Mel. [*Aside.*] Oh, are you there, gentleman?—[*Aloud.*] Come, captain, we'll walk this way, give me your hand.

Braz. My hand, heart's blood, and guts are at your service.—Mr. Worthy, your servant, my dear. [*Exit, leading* Melinda, Lucy *following.*

Wor. Death and fire, this is not to be borne!

Enter Captain Plume.

Plume. No more it is, faith.

Wor. What?

Plume. The March beer at the Raven. I have been doubly serving the queen—raising men, and raising the excise. Recruiting and elections are rare friends to the excise.

Wor. You an't drunk?

Plume. No, no, whimsical only; I could be mighty foolish, and fancy myself mighty witty. Reason still keeps its throne, but it nods a little, that's all.

Wor. Then you're just fit for a frolic.

Plume. As fit as close pinners for a punk in the pit.

Wor. There's your play then, recover me that vessel from that Tangerine.

Plume. She's well rigged, but how is she manned?

Wor. By captain Brazen, that I told you of to-day. She is called the Melinda, a first rate, I can assure you; she sheered off with him just now, on purpose to affront me; but according to your advice I would take no notice, because I would seem to be above a concern for her behaviour.—But have a care of a quarrel.

Plume. No, no, I never quarrel with anything in my cups but an oyster wench, or a cookmaid; and if they ben't civil, I knock 'em down. But heark'ee, my friend, I'll make love, and I must make love. I tell you what, I'll make love like a platoon.

Wor. Platoon, how's that?

Plume. I'll kneel, stoop, and stand, faith; most ladies are gained by platooning.

Wor. Here they come; I must leave you. [*Exit.*

Plume. So! now must I look as sober and as demure as a whore at a christening.

Re enter Captain BRAZEN *and* MELINDA.

Braz. Who's that, madam?

Mel. A brother officer of yours, I suppose, sir.

Braz. Ay!—[*To* PLUME.] My dear!

Plume. My dear! [*Run and embrace.*

Braz. My dear boy, how is't? Your name, my dear? If I be not mistaken, I have seen your face.

Plume. I never saw yours in my life, my dear.—But there's a face well known, as the sun's that shines on all, and is by all adored.

Braz. Have you any pretensions, sir?

Plume. Pretensions!

Braz. That is, sir, have you ever served abroad?

Plume. I have served at home, sir, for ages served this cruel fair—and that will serve the turn, sir.

Mel. So, between the fool and the rake I shall bring a fine spot of work upon my hands!—I see Worthy yonder—I could be content to be friends with him, would he come this way. [*Aside.*

Braz. Will you fight for the lady, sir?

Plume. No, sir, but I'll have her notwithstanding.

Thou peerless princess of Salopian plains,
Envied by nymphs, and worshipp'd by the swains!

Braz. Oons, sir, not fight for her!

Plume. Prithee be quiet—I shall be out—

Behold, how humbly does the Severn glide,
To greet thee princess of the Severn side!

Braz. Don't mind him, madam.—If he were not so well dressed, I should take him for a poet.—But I'll show the difference presently.—Come, madam—we'll place you between us; and now the longest sword carries her. [*Draws:* MELINDA *shrieks.*

Re-enter MR. WORTHY.

Mel. Oh! Mr. Worthy! save me from these madmen. [*Exit with* WORTHY.

Plume. Ha! ha! ha! why don't you follow, sir, and fight the bold ravisher?

Braz. No, sir, you are my man.

Plume. I don't like the wages, and I won't be your man.

Braz. Then you're not worth my sword.

Plume. No! pray what did it cost?

Braz. It cost me twenty pistoles in France, and my enemies thousands of lives in Flanders.

Plume. Then they had a dear bargain.

Enter SILVIA *in male apparel.*

Silv. Save ye, save ye, gentlemen!

Braz. My dear, I'm yours.

Plume. Do you know the gentleman?

Braz. No, but I will presently.—[*To* SILVIA.] Your name, my dear?

Silv. Wilful; Jack Wilful, at your service.

Braz. What, the Kentish Wilfuls, or those of Staffordshire?

Silv. Both, sir, both; I'm related to all the Wilfuls in Europe, and I'm head of the family at present.

Plume. Do you live in this country, sir?

Silv. Yes, sir, I live where I stand; I have neither home, house, nor habitation, beyond this spot of ground.

Braz. What are you, sir?

Silv. A rake.

Plume. In the army, I presume.

Silv. No, but I intend to list immediately.—Look'ee, gentlemen, he that bids me fairest shall have me.

Braz. Sir, I'll prefer you, I'll make you a corporal this minute.

Plume. Corporal! I'll make you my companion, you shall eat with me.

Braz. You shall drink with me.

Plume. You shall lie with me, you young rogue. [*Kisses her.*

Braz. You shall receive your pay, and do no duty.

Silv. Then you must make me a field officer.

Plume. Pho! pho! I'll do more than all this; I'll make you a corporal, and give you a brevet for serjeant.

Braz. Can you read and write, sir?

Silv. Yes.

Braz. Then your business is done—I'll make you chaplain to the regiment.

Silv. Your promises are so equal, that I'm at a loss to choose. There is one Plume, that I hear much commended, in town; pray, which of you is captain Plume?

Plume. I am captain Plume.

Braz. No, no, I am captain Plume.

Silv. Heyday!

Plume. Captain Plume! I'm your servant, my dear.

Braz. Captain Brazen! I am yours.—[*Aside.*] The fellow dare not fight.

Enter Serjeant KITE.

Kite. [*To* Captain PLUME.] Sir, if you please—

Plume. No, no, there's your captain.—Captain Plume, your serjeant here has got so drunk, he mistakes me for you.

Braz. He's an incorrigible sot!—[*To* SILVIA.] Here, my Hector of Holborn, forty shillings for you.

Plume. I forbid the bans.—Look'ee, friend, you shall list with captain Brazen.

Silv. I will see captain Brazen hanged first! I will list with captain Plume, I am a freeborn Englishman, and will be a slave my own way.—[*To* Captain BRAZEN.] Look'ee, sir, will you stand by me?

Braz. I warrant you, my lad.

Silv. [*To* Captain PLUME.] Then I will tell you, captain Brazen, that you are an ignorant, pretending, impudent coxcomb.

Braz. Ay, ay, a sad dog.

Silv. A very sad dog.—Give me the money, noble captain Plume.

Plume. Then you won't list with captain Brazen?

Silv. I won't.

Braz. Never mind him, child, I'll end the dispute presently.—Heark'ee, my dear.

[*Takes* Captain PLUME *to one side of the stage, and entertains him in dumb show.*

Kite. Sir, he in the plain coat is captain Plume, I am his serjeant, and will take my oath on't.

Silv. What! are you serjeant Kite?

Kite. At your service.

Silv. Then I would not take your oath for a farthing.

Kite. A very understanding youth of his age!—Pray, sir, let me look you full in the face?

Silv. Well, sir, what have you to say to my face?

Kite. The very image and superscription of my brother; two bullets of the same caliver were never so like: sure it must be Charles, Charles!

Silv. What d'ye mean by Charles?

Kite. The voice too, only a little variation in Effa ut flat.—My dear brother, for I must call you so, if you should have the fortune to enter into the most noble society of the sword, I bespeak you for a comrade.

Silv. No, sir, I'll be your captain's comrade, if anybody's.

Kite. Ambition there again! 'Tis a noble passion for a soldier; by that I gained this glorious halberd. Ambition! I see a commission in his face already. Pray, noble captain, give me leave to salute you. [*Offers to kiss her.*

Silv. What, men kiss one another!

Kite. We officers do: 'tis our way; we live together like man and wife, always either kissing or fighting.—But I see a storm coming.

Silv. Now, serjeant, I shall see who is your captain by your knocking down the t'other.

Kite. My captain scorns assistance, sir.

Braz. How dare you contend for anything, and not dare to draw your sword? But you're a young fellow, and have not been much abroad; I excuse that, but prithee resign the man, prithee do; you're a very honest fellow.

Plume. You lie; and you are a son of a whore.

[*Draws and makes up to* Captain BRAZEN.

Braz. Hold! hold! did not you refuse to fight for the lady? [*Retiring.*

Plume. I always do—but for a man I'll fight knee deep: so you lie again.

[PLUME *and* BRAZEN *fight a traverse or two about the stage;* SILVIA *draws, and is held by* KITE, *who sounds to arms with his mouth; takes* SILVIA *in his arms, and carries her off.*

Braz. Hold! where's the man?

Plume. Gone.

Braz. Then what do we fight for?—[*Puts up.*] Now let's embrace, my dear.

Plume. [*Putting up.*] With all my heart, my dear.—[*Aside.*] I suppose Kite has listed him by this time. [*They embrace.*

Braz. You are a brave fellow, I always fight with a man before I make him my friend; and if once I find he will fight, I never quarrel with him afterwards.—And now I'll tell you a secret, my dear friend, that lady that we frighted out of the walk just now I found in bed this morning—so beautiful, so inviting!—I presently locked the door—but I am a man of honour.—But I believe I shall marry her nevertheless—her twenty thousand pound, you know, will be a pretty convenience.—I had an assignation with her here, but your coming spoiled my sport. Curse you, my dear, but don't do so again—

Plume. No, no, my dear, men are my business at present. [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Walk by the Severn.*

Enter ROSE *and* BULLOCK *meeting.*

Rose. Where have you been, you great booby? you're always out o' the way in the time of preferment.

Bull. Preferment! who should prefer me?

Rose. I would prefer you! who should prefer a man but a woman? Come, throw away that great club, hold up your head, cock your hat, and look big.

Bull. Ah, Ruose, Ruose, I fear somebody will look big sooner than folk think of! this genteel breeding never comes into the country without a train of followers.—Here has been Cartwheel, your sweetheart, what will become of him?

Rose. Look'ee, I'm a great woman, and will provide for my relations. I told the captain how finely he could play upon the tabor and pipe, so he has set him down for drum-major.

Bull. Nay, sister, why did not you keep that place for me? you know I always loved to be a-drumming, if it were but on a table or on a quart pot.

Enter SILVIA.

Silv. Had I but a commission in my pocket, I fancy my breeches would become me as well as any ranting fellow of 'em all; for I take a bold step, a rakish toss, a smart cock, and an impudent air, to be the principal ingredients in the composition of a captain.—What's here: Rose! my nurse's daughter!—I'll go and practise.—Come, child, kiss me at once.—[*Kisses* ROSE.] And her brother too!—[*To* BULLOCK.] Well, honest dungfork, do you know the difference between a horse-cart, and a cart-horse, eh?

Bull. I presume that your worship is a captain by your clothes and your courage.

Silv. Suppose I were, would you be contented to list, friend?

Rose. No, no, though your worship be a handsome man, there be others as fine as you; my brother is engaged to captain Plume.

Silv. Plume! do you know captain Plume?

Rose. Yes, I do, and he knows me. He took the very ribbons out of his shirt-sleeves, and put 'em into my shoes. See there—I can assure you, that I can do anything with the captain.

Bull. That is, in a modest way, sir.—Have a care what you say, Ruose, don't shame your parentage.

Rose. Nay, for that matter, I am not so simple as to say that I can do anything with the captain but what I may do with anybody else.

Silv. So! and pray what do you expect from this captain, child?

Rose. I expect, sir,—I expect—but he ordered me to tell nobody.—But suppose that he should promise to marry me?

Silv. You should have a care, my dear, men will promise anything beforehand.

Rose. I know that, but he promised to marry me afterwards.

Bull. Wauns, Ruose, what have you said?

Silv. Afterwards! after what?

Rose. After I had sold him my chickens.—I hope there's no harm in that.

Enter Captain PLUME.

Plume. What, Mr. Wilful, so close with my market-woman!

Silv. [*Aside.*] I'll try if he loves her.—[*Aloud.*] Close, sir! ay, and closer yet, sir.—Come, my pretty maid, you and I will withdraw a little.

Plume. No, no, friend, I han't done with her yet.

Silv. Nor have I begun with her, so I have as good right as you have.

Plume. Thou art a bloody impudent fellow.

Silv. Sir, I would qualify myself for the service.

Plume. Hast thou really a mind to the service?

Silv. Yes, sir: so let her go.

Rose. Pray, gentlemen, don't be so violent.

Plume. Come, leave it to the girl's own choice.—Will you belong to me or to that gentleman?

Rose. Let me consider, you are both very handsome.

Plume. Now the natural unconstancy of her sex begins to work. [*Aside.*

Rose. Pray, sir, what will you give me?

Bull. Don't be angry, sir, that my sister should be mercenary, for she's but young.

Silv. Give thee, child! I'll set thee above scandal; you shall have a coach with six before and six behind, an equipage to make vice fashionable, and put virtue out of countenance.

Plume. Pho! that's easily done.—I'll do more for thee, child, I'll buy you a furbelow scarf, and give you a ticket to see a play.

Bull. A play! Wauns, Ruose, take the ticket, and let's see the show.

Silv. Look'ee, captain, if you won't resign, I'll go list with captain Brazen this minute.

Plume. Will you list with me if I give up my title?

Silv. I will.

Plume. Take her: I'll change a woman for a man at any time.

Rose. I have heard before, indeed, that you captains used to sell your men.

Bull. Pray, captain, do not send Ruose to the West Indies. [*Cries.*

Plume. Ha! ha! ha! West Indies!—No, no, my honest lad, give me thy hand; nor you nor she shall move a step farther than I do. This gentleman is one of us, and will be kind to you, Mrs. Rose.

Rose. But will you be so kind to me, sir, as the captain would?

Silv. I can't be altogether so kind to you, my circumstances are not so good as the captain's; but I'll take care of you, upon my word.

Plume. Ay, ay, we'll all take care of her; she shall live like a princess, and her brother here shall be—What would you be?

Bull. O sir! if you had not promised the place of drum-major—

Plume. Ay, that is promised. But what think you of barrack-master? You are a person of understanding, and barrack-master you shall be.—But what's become of this same Cartwheel you told me of, my dear?

Rose. We'll go fetch him.—Come, brother barrack-master.—We shall find you at home, noble captain?

Plume. Yes, yes.—[*Exeunt* ROSE *and* BULLOCK.] And now, sir, here are your forty shillings.

Silv. Captain Plume, I despise your listing money; if I do serve, 'tis purely for love—of that wench, I mean. For you must know, that, among my other sallies, I have spent the best part of my fortune in search of a maid, and could never find one hitherto: so you may be assured I'd not sell my freedom under a less purchase than I did my estate. So, before I list, I must be certified that this girl is a virgin.

Plume. Mr. Wilful, I can't tell you how you can be certified in that point till you try; but, upon my honour, she may be a vestal for aught that I know to the contrary. I gained her heart, indeed, by some trifling presents and promises, and, knowing that the best security for a woman's soul is her body, I would have made myself master of that too, had not the jealousy of my impertinent landlady interposed.

Silv. So you only want an opportunity for accomplishing your designs upon her?

Plume. Not at all; I have already gained my ends, which were only the drawing in one or two of her followers. The women, you know, are the loadstones everywhere; gain the wives, and you are caressed by the husbands; please the mistresses, and you are valued by the gallants; secure an interest with the finest women at court, and you procure the favour of the greatest men: so, kiss the prettiest country wenches, and you are sure of listing the lustiest fellows. Some people may call this artifice, but I term it stratagem, since it is so main a part of the service. Besides, the fatigue of recruiting is so intolerable, that, unless we could make ourselves some pleasure amidst the pain, no mortal man would be able to bear it.

Silv. Well, sir, I am satisfied as to the point in debate; but now let me beg you to lay aside your recruiting airs, put on the man of honour, and tell me plainly what usage I must expect when I am under your command.

Plume. You must know, in the first place, then, that I hate to have gentlemen in my company; for they are always troublesome and expensive, sometimes dangerous; and 'tis a constant maxim amongst us, that those who know the least obey the best. Notwithstanding all this, I find something so agreeable about you, that engages me to court your company; and I can't tell how it is, but I should be uneasy to see you under the command of anybody else. Your usage will chiefly depend upon your behaviour; only this you must expect, that if you commit a small fault I will excuse it, if a great one I'll discharge you; for something tells me I shall not be able to punish you.

Silv. And something tells me, that if you do discharge me, 'twill be the greatest punishment you can inflict; for were we this moment to go upon the greatest dangers in your profession, they would be less terrible to me than to stay behind you.—And now your hand, this lists me—and now you are my captain.

Plume. [*Kissing her.*] Your friend.—[*Aside.*] 'Sdeath! there's something in this fellow that charms me.

Silv. One favour I must beg. This affair will make some noise, and I have some friends that would censure my conduct if I threw myself into the circumstance of a private sentinel of my own head: I must therefore take care to be impressed by the act of parliament; you shall leave that to me.

Plume. What you please as to that.—Will you lodge at my quarters in the mean time? you shall have part of my bed.

Silv. O fy! lie with a common soldier! Would not you rather lie with a common woman?

Plume. No, faith, I'm not that rake that the world imagines; I have got an air of freedom, which people mistake for lewdness in me, as they mistake formality in others for religion. The world is all a cheat; only I take mine, which is undesigned, to be more excusable than theirs which is hypocritical. I hurt nobody but myself, and they abuse all mankind.—Will you lie with me?

Silv. No, no, captain, you forget Rose; she's to be my bedfellow, you know.

Plume. I had forgot; pray be kind to her.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*The same.*

Enter Melinda *and* Lucy.

Mel. [*Aside.*] 'Tis the greatest misfortune in nature for a woman to want a confidant! We are so weak that we can do nothing without assistance, and then a secret racks us worse than the colic. I am at this minute so sick of a secret, that I'm ready to faint away.—[*Aloud.*] Help me, Lucy!

Lucy. Bless me, madam! what's the matter?

Mel. Vapours only, I begin to recover.—[*Aside.*] If Silvia were in town I could heartily forgive her faults for the ease of discovering my own.

Lucy. You're thoughtful, madam; am not I worthy to know the cause?

Mel. You are a servant, and a secret would make you saucy.

Lucy. Not unless you should find fault without a cause, madam.

Mel. Cause or not cause, I must not lose the pleasure of chiding when I please; women must discharge their vapours somewhere, and before we get husbands our servants must expect to bear with 'em.

Lucy. Then, madam, you had better raise me to a degree above a servant. You know my family, and that five hundred pounds would set me upon the foot of a gentlewoman, and make me worthy the confidence of any lady in the land; besides, madam, 'twill extremely encourage me in the great design I now have in hand.

Mel. I don't find that your design can be of any great advantage to you. 'Twill please me, indeed, in the humour I have of being revenged on the fool for his vanity of making love to me, so I don't much care if I do promise you five hundred pound the day of my marriage.

Lucy. That is the way, madam, to make me diligent in the vocation of a confidant, which I think is generally to bring people together.

Mel. O Lucy! I can hold my secret no longer. You must know, that hearing of the famous fortune-teller in town, I went disguised to satisfy a curiosity, which has cost me dear. That fellow is certainly the devil, or one of his bosom favourites, he has told me the most surprising things of my past life—

Lucy. Things past, madam, can hardly be reckoned surprising, because we know them already. Did he tell you anything surprising that was to come?

Mel. One thing very surprising; he said I should die a maid!

Lucy. Die a maid! come into the world for nothing! Dear madam, if you should believe him, it might come to pass, for the bare thought on't might kill one in four-and-twenty hours.—And did you ask him any questions about me?

Mel. You! why, I passed for you.

Lucy. So 'tis I that am to die a maid!—But the devil was a liar from the beginning; he can't make me die a maid.—[*Aside.*] I have put it out of his power already.

Mel. I do but jest, I would have passed for you, and called myself Lucy; but he presently told me my name, my quality, my fortune, and gave me the whole history of my life. He told me of a lover I had in this country, and described Worthy exactly, but in nothing so well as in his present indifference. I fled to him for refuge here to-day; he never so much as encouraged me in my fright, but coldly told me that he was sorry for the accident, because it might give the town cause to censure my conduct; excused his not waiting on me home, made me a careless bow, and walked off. 'Sdeath! I could have stabbed him, or myself, 'twas the same thing.—Yonder he comes—I will so use him!

Lucy. Don't exasperate him; consider what the fortune-teller told you. Men are scarce, and as times go, it is not impossible for a woman to die a maid.

Mel. No matter.

Enter Mr. Worthy.

Wor. [*Aside.*] I find she's warmed; I must strike while the iron is hot.—[*Aloud.*] You have a great deal of courage, madam, to venture into the walks where you were so lately frightened!

Mel. And you have a quantity of impudence to appear before me, that you have so lately affronted.

Wor. I had no design to affront you, nor appear before you either, madam: I left you here, because I had business in another place, and came hither, thinking to meet another person.

Mel. Since you find yourself disappointed, I hope you'll withdraw to another part of the walk.

Wor. The walk is as free for me as you, madam, and broad enough for us both.—[*They walk by one another, he with his hat cocked, she fretting and tearing her fan.*] Will you please to take snuff, madam?

[*Offers her his box, she strikes it out of his hand; while he is gathering it up,*

Enter Captain Brazen.

Braz. What, here before me, my dear!

[*Clasps* Melinda *round the waist.*

Mel. What means this insolence?

[*Gives him a box on the ear.*

Lucy. Are you mad? don't you see Mr. Worthy? [*To* Captain BRAZEN.

Bras. No, no, I'm struck blind.—Worthy! odso! well turned!—My mistress has wit at her fingers' ends.—Madam, I ask your pardon, 'tis our way abroad.—Mr. Worthy, you are the happy man.

Wor. I don't envy your happiness very much, if the lady can afford no other sort of favours but what she has bestowed upon you.

Mel. I am sorry the favour miscarried, for it was designed for you, Mr. Worthy; and be assured, 'tis the last and only favour you must expect at my hands.—Captain, I ask your pardon.

Bras. I grant it.—[*Exeunt* MELINDA *and* LUCY.] You see, Mr. Worthy, 'twas only a random-shot, it might have taken off your head as well as mine. Courage, my dear! 'tis the fortune of war.—But the enemy has thought fit to withdraw, I think.

Wor. Withdraw! oons, sir! what d'ye mean by withdraw?

Bras. I'll show you. [*Exit.*

Wor. She's lost, irrecoverably lost, and Plume's advice has ruined me! 'Sdeath! why should I, that knew her haughty spirit, be ruled by a man that's a stranger to her pride?

Enter Captain PLUME.

Plume. Ha! ha! ha! a battle-royal. Don't frown so, man; she's your own, I tell you; I saw the fury of her love in the extremity of her passion: the wildness of her anger is a certain sign that she loves you to madness. That rogue Kite began the battle with abundance of conduct, and will bring you off victorious, my life on't; he plays his part admirably; she's to be with him again presently.

Wor. But what could be the meaning of Brazen's familiarity with her?

Plume. You are no logician, if you pretend to draw consequences from the actions of fools: there's no arguing by the rule of reason upon a science without principles, and such is their conduct. Whim, unaccountable whim, hurries 'em on like a man drunk with brandy before ten o'clock in the morning.—But we lose our sport: Kite has opened above an hour ago, let's away. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—Serjeant KITE's *Quarters.*

Serjeant KITE, *in a conjuror's habit, discovered sitting at a table, whereon are a globe and books.*

Kite. [*Rising.*] By the position of the heavens, gained from my observation upon these celestial globes, I find that Luna was a tidewaiter, Sol a surveyor, Mercury a thief, Venus a whore, Saturn an alderman, Jupiter a rake, and Mars a serjeant of grenadiers; and this is the system of Kite the conjurer.

Enter Captain PLUME *and* Mr. WORTHY.

Plume. Well, what success?

Kite. I have sent away a shoemaker and a tailor already; one's to be a captain of marines, and the other a major of dragoons: I am to manage them at night.—Have you seen the lady, Mr. Worthy?

Wor. Ay, but it won't do. Have you showed her her name, that I tore off from the bottom of the letter?

Kite. No, sir, I reserve that for the last stroke.

Plume. What letter?

Wor. One that I would not let you see, for fear that you should break Melinda's windows in good earnest. [*Knocking at the door.*

Kite. Officers, to your posts. [PLUME *and* WORTHY *conceal themselves behind a screen.*]—Tycho, mind the door. [Servant *opens the door.*

Enter THOMAS.

Thos. Well, master, are you the cunning man?

Kite. I am the learned Copernicus.

Thos. Well, master Coppernose, I'm but a poor man, and I can't afford above a shilling for my fortune.

Kite. Perhaps that is more than 'tis worth.

Thos. Look'ee, doctor, let me have something that's good for my shilling, or I'll have my money again.

Kite. If there be faith in the stars, you shall have your shilling forty fold.—Your hand, countryman, you're by trade a smith.

Thos. How the devil should you know that?

Kite. Because the devil and you are brother-tradesmen—you were born under Forceps.

Thos. Forceps, what's that?

Kite. One of the signs. There's Leo, Sagittarius, Forceps, Furnes, Dixmude, Namur, Brussels, Charleroy, and so forth—twelve of 'em.—Let me see—did you ever make any bombs or cannon-bullets?

Thos. Not I.

Kite. You either have or will. The stars have decreed, that you shall be—I must have more money, sir,—your fortune's great.

Thos. Faith, doctor, I have no more.

Kite. O sir, I'll trust you, and take it out of your arrears.

Thos. Arrears! what arrears?

Kite. The five hundred pound that's owing to you from the government.

Thos. Owing me!

Kite. Owing you, sir.—Let me see your t'other hand.—I beg your pardon, it will be owing to you: and the rogue of an agent will demand fifty per cent. for a fortnight's advance.

Thos. I'm in the clouds, doctor, all this while.

Kite. Sir, I am above 'em, among the stars. In two years, three months, and two hours, you will be made captain of the forges to the grand train of artillery, and will have ten shillings a day, and two servants. 'Tis the decree of the stars, and of the fixed stars, that are as immoveable as your anvil; strike, sir, while the iron is hot. Fly, sir! begone!

Thos. What, what would you have me do, doctor? I wish the stars would put me in a way for this fine place.

Kite. The stars do.—Let me see—ay, about an hour hence walk carelessly into the market-place, and you'll see a tall, slender gentleman, cheapening a pennyworth of apples, with a cane hanging upon his button. This gentleman will ask you what's o'clock. He's your man, and the maker of your fortune: follow him, follow him.—And now go home, and take leave of your wife and children; an hour hence exactly is your time.

Thos. A tall slender gentleman, you say, with a cane? pray, what sort of head has the cane?

Kite. An amber head, with a black ribbon.

Thos. And pray, of what employment is the gentleman?

Kite. Let me see, he's either a collector of the excise, a plenipotentiary, or a captain of grenadiers, I can't tell exactly which. But he'll call you honest—your name is—

Thos. Thomas.

Kite. Right! He'll call you honest Tom.

Thos. But how the devil should he know my name?

Kite. Oh, there are several sorts of Toms! Tom o' Lincoln, Tom-tit, Tom Tell-troth, Tom o' Bedlam, and Tom Fool.—[*Knocking at the door.*] Begone!—an hour hence precisely.

Thos. You say, he'll ask me what's o'clock?

Kite. Most certainly.—And you'll answer you don't know:—and be sure you look at St. Mary's dial; for the sun won't shine, and if it should, you won't be able to tell the figures.

Thos. I will, I will. [*Exit.*

Plume. [*Behind.*] Well done, conjurer! go on and prosper.

Kite. As you were.

Enter PLUCK.

[*Aside.*] What my old friend Pluck the butcher! I offered the surly bull-dog five guineas this morning, and he refused it.

Pluck. So, master Conjurer, here's half-a-crown.—And now you must understand—

Kite. Hold, friend, I know your business beforehand.

Pluck. You're devilish cunning then, for I don't well know it myself.

Kite. I know more than you, friend.—You have a foolish saying, that such a one knows no more than the man in the moon: I tell you, the man in the moon knows more than all the men under the sun. Don't the moon see all the world?

Pluck. All the world see the moon, I must confess.

Kite. Then she must see all the world, that's certain.—Give me your hand.—You're by trade, either a butcher or a surgeon.

Pluck. True, I am a butcher.

Kite. And a surgeon you will be, the employments differ only in the name: he that can cut up an ox, may dissect a man; and the same dexterity that cracks a marrow-bone, will cut off a leg or an arm.

Pluck. What d'ye mean, doctor, what d'ye mean?

Kite. Patience, patience, Mr. Surgeon General; the stars are great bodies, and move slowly.

Pluck. But what d'ye mean by surgeon-general, doctor?

Kite. Nay, sir, if your worship won't have patience, I must beg the favour of your worship's absence.

Pluck. My worship! my worship! but why my worship?

Kite. Nay then, I have done. [*Sits down.*

Pluck. Pray, doctor—

Kite. Fire and fury, sir!—[*Rises in a passion.*] Do you think the stars will be hurried? Do the stars owe you any money, sir, that you dare to dun their lordships at this rate? Sir, I am porter to the stars, and I am ordered to let no dun come near their doors.

Pluck. Dear doctor, I never had any dealings with the stars, they don't owe me a penny. But since you are their porter, please to accept of this half-crown to drink their healths, and don't be angry.

Kite. Let me see your hand then once more.—Here has been gold—five guineas, my friend, in this very hand this morning.

Pluck. Nay, then he is the devil!—Pray, doctor, were you born of a woman? or, did you come into the world of your own head?

Kite. That's a secret.—This gold was offered you by a proper handsome man, called Hawk, or Buzzard, or—

Pluck. Kite you mean.

Kite. Ay, ay, Kite.

Pluck. As arrant a rogue as ever carried a halberd! The impudent rascal would have decoyed me for a soldier!

Kite. A soldier! a man of your substance for a soldier! Your mother has a hundred pound in hard money, lying at this minute in the hands of a mercer, not forty yards from this place.

Pluck. Oons! and so she has, but very few know so much.

Kite. I know it, and that rogue, what's his name, Kite knew it, and offered you five guineas to list, because he knew your poor mother would give the hundred for your discharge.

Pluck. There's a dog now! — Flesh, doctor, I'll give you t'other half-crown, and tell me that this same Kite will be hanged.

Kite. He's in as much danger as any man in the county of Salop.

Pluck. There's your fee.—But you have forgot the surgeon-general all this while.

Kite. You put the stars in a passion.—[*Looks on his books.*] But now they are pacified again:—Let me see, did you never cut off a man's leg?

Pluck. No.

Kite. Recollect, pray.

Pluck. I say, no.

Kite. That's strange! wonderful strange! but nothing is strange to me, such wonderful changes have I seen.—The second, or third, ay, the third campaign that you make in Flanders, the leg of a great officer will be shattered by a great shot, you will be there accidentally, and with your cleaver chop off the limb at a blow: in short, the operation will be performed with so much dexterity, that with the general applause you will be made surgeon-general of the whole army.

Pluck. Nay, for the matter of cutting off a limb, I'll do't, I'll do't with any surgeon in Europe, but I have no thoughts of making a campaign.

Kite. You have no thoughts! what's matter for your thoughts? The stars have decreed it, and you must go.

Pluck. The stars decree it! oons, sir, the justices can't press me!

Kite. Nay, friend, 'tis none of my business, I ha' done; only mind this, you'll know more an hour and a half hence, that's all, farewell! [*Going.*

Pluck. Hold, hold, doctor!—Surgeon-general! what is the place worth, pray?

Kite. Five hundred pounds a year, besides guineas for claps.

Pluck. Five hundred pounds a year!—An hour and a half hence, you say?

Kite. Prithee, friend, be quiet, don't be so troublesome. Here's such a work to make a booby butcher accept of five hundred pound a year!—But if you must hear it—I'll tell you in short, you'll be stand-

ing in your stall an hour and half hence, and a gentleman will come by with a snuffbox in his hand, and the tip of his handkerchief hanging out of his right pocket; he'll ask you the price of a loin of veal, and at the same time stroke your great dog upon the head, and call him Chopper.

Pluck. Mercy on us! Chopper is the dog's name.

Kite. Look'ee there—what I say is true—things that are to come must come to pass. Get you home, sell off your stock, don't mind the whining and the snivelling of your mother and your sister—women always hinder preferment—make what money you can, and follow that gentleman, his name begins with a P, mind that.—There will be the barber's daughter too, that you promised marriage to—she will be pulling and haling you to pieces.

Pluck. What! know Sally too? He's the devil, and he needs must go that the devil drives.—[*Going.*] The tip of his handkerchief out of his left pocket?

Kite. No, no, his right pocket; if it be the left, 'tis none of the man.

Pluck. Well, well, I'll mind him. [*Exit.*

Plume. [*Behind.*] The right pocket, you say? [*Knocking at the door.*

Kite. I hear the rustling of silks. Fly, sir! 'tis madam Melinda.

Enter MELINDA *and* LUCY.

Tycho, chairs for the ladies. [*Calls to* Servant.

Mel. Don't trouble yourself, we shan't stay, doctor.

Kite. Your ladyship is to stay much longer than you imagine.

Mel. For what?

Kite. For a husband.—[*To* LUCY.] For your part, madam, you won't stay for a husband.

Lucy. Pray, doctor, do you converse with the stars, or with the devil?

Kite. With both. When I have the destinies of men in search, I consult the stars; when the affairs of women come under my hands, I advise with my t'other friend.

Mel. And have you raised the devil upon my account?

Kite. Yes, madam, and he's now under the table.

Lucy. Oh, Heavens protect us! Dear madam, let's be gone.

Kite. If you be afraid of him, why do you come to consult him?

Mel. [*To* LUCY.] Don't fear, fool.—[*To* KITE.] Do you think, sir, that because I am a woman, I'm to be fooled out of my reason, or frighted out of my senses? Come, show me this devil.

Kite. He's a little busy at present; but when he has done, he shall wait on you.

Mel. What is he doing?

Kite. Writing your name in his pocket-book.

Mel. Ha! ha! my name! Pray, what have you or he to do with my name?

Kite. Look'ee, fair lady, the devil is a very modest person, he seeks nobody unless they seek him first; he's chained up like a mastiff, and can't stir unless he be let loose. You come to me to have your fortune told—do you think, madam, that I can answer you of my own head? No madam, the affairs of women are so irregular, that nothing less than the devil can give any account of 'em. Now to convince you of your incredulity, I'll show you a trial of my skill.—Here, you *Cacodemon del fuego*—exert your power, draw me this lady's name, the word Melinda, in the proper letters and character of her own handwriting.—Do it at three motions—one—two—three—'tis done.—Now, madam, will you please to send your maid to fetch it?

Lucy. I fetch it! the devil fetch me if I do!

Mel. My name in my own handwriting! that would be convincing indeed.

Kite. Seeing's believing.—[*Goes to the table, lifts up the carpet.*] Here, Tre, Tre, poor Tre, give me the bone, sirrah.—[*He puts his hand under the table,* PLUME *steals to the other side of the table, and catches him by the hand.*] Oh! oh! the devil! the devil in good earnest! My hand! my hand! the devil! my hand!—[MELINDA *and* LUCY *shriek, and run to a corner of the stage.* KITE *discovers* PLUME, *and gets away his hand.*] A plague o' your pincers! he has fixed his nails in my very flesh.—O madam! you put the demon in such a passion with your scruples, that it has almost cost me my hand.

Mel. It has cost us our lives almost—but have you got the name?

Kite. Got it! ay, madam, I have got it here—I'm sure the blood comes.—But there's your name upon that square piece of paper—behold!

Mel. 'Tis wonderful! my very letters to a tittle!

Lucy. 'Tis like your hand, madam, but not so like your hand neither, and now I look nearer, 'tis not like your hand at all.

Kite. Here's a chambermaid now that will outlie the devil!

Lucy. Look'ee, madam, they shan't impose upon us; people can't remember their hands, no more than they can their faces.—Come, madam, let us be certain, write your name upon this paper, then we'll compare the two names. [*Takes out a paper, and folds it.*

Kite. Anything for your satisfaction, madam—here's pen and ink. [MELINDA *writes,* LUCY *holds the paper.*

Lucy. Let me see it, madam; 'tis the same—the very same.—[*Aside.*] But I'll secure one copy for my own affairs.

Mel. This is demonstration.

Kite. 'Tis so, madam—The word demonstration comes from Demon the father of lies.

Mel. Well, doctor, I am convinced; and now, pray, what account can you give me of my future fortune?

Kite. Before the sun has made one course round this earthly globe, your fortune will be fixed for happiness or misery.

Mel. What! so near the crisis of my fate!

Kite. Let me see—about the hour of ten to-morrow morning you will be saluted by a gentleman, who will come to take his leave of you, being designed for travel; his intention of going abroad is sudden, and the occasion a woman. Your fortune and his are like the bullet and the barrel, one runs plump into the other. In short, if the gentleman travels, he will die abroad; and if he does, you will die before he comes home.

Mel. What sort of man is he?

Kite. Madam, he's a fine gentleman and a lover, that is, a man of very good sense, and a very great fool.

Mel. How is that possible, doctor?

Kite. Because, madam—because it is so.—A woman's reason is the best for a man's being a fool.

Mel. Ten o'clock, you say?

Kite. Ten—about the hour of tea-drinking throughout the kingdom.

Mel. Here, doctor.—[*Gives money.*] Lucy, have you any questions to ask?

Lucy. O madam! a thousand.

Kite. I must beg your patience till another time; for I expect more company this minute; besides, I must discharge the gentleman under the table.

Lucy. Oh, pray, sir, discharge us first!

Kite. Tycho, wait on the ladies down stairs.

[*Exeunt* MELINDA *and* LUCY. PLUME *and* WORTHY *come forward laughing.*

Kite. Ay, you may well laugh, gentlemen, not all the cannon of the French army could have frighted me so much as that gripe you gave me under the table.

Plume. I think, Mr. Doctor, I out-conjured you that bout.

Kite. I was surprised, for I should not have taken a captain for a conjuror.

Plume. No more than I should a serjeant for a wit.

Kite. Mr. Worthy, you were pleased to wish me joy to-day, I hope to be able to return the compliment to-morrow.

Wor. I'll make it the best compliment to you that you ever made in your life, if you do. But I must be a traveller, you say?

Kite. No farther than the chops of the Channel, I presume, sir.

Plume. That we have concerted already.—[*Loud knocking at the door.*] Heyday! you don't profess midwifery, doctor.

Kite. Away to your ambuscade!

[PLUME *and* WORTHY *retire as before.*

Enter Captain BRAZEN.

Braz. Your servant, servant, my dear.

Kite. Stand off, I have my familiar already.

Braz. Are you bewitched, my dear?

Kite. Yes, my dear; but mine is a peaceable spirit, and hates gunpowder. Thus I fortify myself.—[*Draws a circle round him.*] And now, captain, have a care how you force my lines.

Braz. Lines! what dost talk of lines! You have something like a fishing-rod there, indeed; but I come to be acquainted with you, man.—What's your name, my dear?

Kite. Conundrum.

Braz. Conundrum! rat me, I knew a famous doctor in London of your name!—Where were you born?

Kite. I was born in Algebra.

Braz. Algebra! 'tis no country in Christendom, I'm sure, unless it be some pitiful place in the Highlands of Scotland.

Kite. Right, I told you I was bewitched.

Braz. So am I, my dear: I am going to be married. I have had two letters from a lady of fortune that loves me to madness, fits, colic, spleen, and vapours: shall I marry her in four-and-twenty hours, ay, or no?

Kite. I must have the year and day of the month when these letters were dated.

Braz. Why, you old bitch, did you ever hear of love-letters dated with the year and day o' the month? Do you think billets-doux are like bank bills?

Kite. They are not so good.—But if they bear no date, I must examine the contents.

Braz. Contents! that you shall, old boy: here they be both. [*Pulls out two letters.*

Kite. Only the last you received, if you please.—[*Takes one of the letters.*] Now, sir, if you please to let me consult my books for a minute, I'll send this letter inclosed to you with the determination of the stars upon it to your lodgings.

Braz. With all my heart—I must give him—[*Puts his hands in his pocket.*] Algebra! I fancy, doctor, 'tis hard to calculate the place of your nativity?—Here.—[*Gives him money.*] And if I succeed, I'll build a watch-tower upon the top of the highest mountain in Wales for the study of astrology, and the benefit of Conundrums.

[*Exit.* PLUME *and* WORTHY *come forward.*

Wor. O doctor! that letter's worth a million. Let me see it.—[*Takes the letter.*] And now I have it, I'm afraid to open it.

Plume. Pho! let me see it.—[*Snatches the letter from* WORTHY *and opens it.*] If she be a jilt—damn her, she is one! there's her name at the bottom on't.

Wor. How! then I'll travel in good earnest.—[*Looking at the letter.*] By all my hopes, 'tis Lucy's hand!

Plume. Lucy's!

Wor. Certainly; 'tis no more like Melinda's character than black is to white.

Plume. Then 'tis certainly Lucy's contrivance to draw in Brazen for a husband.—But are you sure 'tis not Melinda's hand?

Wor. You shall see.—[*To* KITE.] Where's the bit of paper I gave you just now that the devil writ Melinda upon?

Kite. Here, sir.

Plume. 'Tis plain they're not the same. And is this the malicious name that was subscribed to the letter, which made Mr. Balance send his daughter into the country?

Wor. The very same, the other fragments I showed you just now. I once intended it for another use; but I think I have turned it now to better advantage.

Plume. But 'twas barbarous to conceal this so long, and to continue me so many hours in the pernicious heresy of believing that angelic creature could change!—Poor Silvia!

Wor. Rich Silvia you mean, and poor captain, ha! ha! ha! Come, come, friend, Melinda is true and shall be mine; Silvia is constant, and may be yours.

Plume. No, she's above my hopes: but for her sake I'll recant my opinion of her sex.

By some the sex is blamed without design,
Light harmless censure, such as yours and mine;
Sallies of wit, and vapours of our wine.
Others the justice of the sex condemn,
And wanting merit to create esteem,
Would hide their own defects by censuring them.
But they, secure in their all-conquering charms,
Laugh at the vain efforts of false alarms;
He magnifies their conquests who complains,
For none would struggle were they not in chains.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Anteroom adjoining* SILVIA'S *Bedchamber; A periwig, hat, and sword, upon the table.*

Enter SILVIA *in her nightcap.*

Silv. I have rested but indifferently, and I believe my bedfellow was as little pleased; poor Rose! here she comes—

Enter ROSE.

Good morrow, my dear, how d'ye this morning?

Rose. Just as I was last night, neither better nor worse for you.

Silv. What's the matter? did you not like your bedfellow?

Rose. I don't know whether I had a bedfellow or not.

Silv. Did not I lie with you?

Rose. No: I wonder you could have the conscience to ruin a poor girl for nothing.

Silv. I have saved thee from ruin, child; don't be melancholy, I can give you as many fine things as the captain can.

Rose. But you can't I'm sure. [*Knocking at the door.*

Silv. Odso! my accoutrements.—[*Puts on her periwig, hat, and sword.*] Who's at the door?

Constable. [*Without.*] Open the door, or we'll break it down.

Silv. Patience a little. [*Opens the door.*

Enter Constable *and* Watch.

Con. We have 'em, we have 'em! the duck and the mallard both in the decoy.

Silv. What means this riot? Stand off!—[*Draws.*] the man dies that comes within reach of my point.

Con. That is not the point, master; put up your sword or I shall knock you down; and so I command the queen's peace.

Silv. You are some blockhead of a constable.

Con. I am so, and have a warrant to apprehend the bodies of you and your whore there.

Rose. Whore! never was poor woman so abused.

Enter BULLOCK *unbuttoned.*

Bull. What's the matter now?—O Mr. Bridewell! what brings you abroad so early?

Con. This, sir.—[*Lays hold of* BULLOCK.] You're the queen's prisoner.

Bull. Wauns, you lie, sir! I'm the queen's soldier.

Con. No matter for that, you shall go before Justice Balance.

Silv. [*Aside.*] Balance! 'tis what I wanted.—[*Aloud.*] Here, Mr. Constable, I resign my sword.

Rose. Can't you carry us before the captain, Mr. Bridewell?

Con. Captain! han't you got your bellyfull of captains yet?—Come, come, make way there. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Justice BALANCE'S *House.*

Enter Justice BALANCE *and* Justice SCALE.

Scale. I say 'tis not to be borne, Mr. Balance!

Bal. Look'ee, Mr. Scale, for my own part I shall be very tender in what regards the officers of the army; they expose their lives to so many dangers for us abroad, that we may give them some grains of allowance at home.

Scale. Allowance! this poor girl's father is my tenant; and, if I mistake not, her mother nursed a child for you. Shall they debauch our daughters to our faces?

Bal. Consider, Mr. Scale, that were it not for the bravery of these officers, we should have French dragoons among us, that would leave us neither liberty, property, wife, nor daughter. Come, Mr. Scale, the gentlemen are vigorous and warm, and may they continue so; the same heat that stirs them up to love, spurs them on to battle: you never knew a great general in your life, that did not love a whore. This I only speak in reference to captain Plume—for the other spark I know nothing of.

Scale. Nor can I hear of anybody that does.—Oh, here they come.

Enter Constable *and* Watch, *with* SILVIA, BULLOCK, *and* ROSE.

Con. May it please your worships we took them in the very act, *re infecta*, sir. The gentleman, indeed, behaved himself like a gentleman; for he drew his sword and swore, and afterwards laid it down, and said nothing.

Bal. Give the gentleman his sword again—wait you without.—[*Exeunt* Constable *and* Watch.] I'm sorry, sir,—[*To* SILVIA] to know a gentleman upon such terms, that the occasion of our meeting should prevent the satisfaction of an acquaintance.

Silv. Sir, you need make no apology for your warrant, no more than I shall do for my behaviour: my innocence is upon an equal foot with your authority.

Scale. Innocence! have not you seduced that young maid?

Silv. No, Mr. Goosecap, she seduced me.

Bull. So she did, I'll swear—for she proposed marriage first.

Bal. What, then you are married, child? [*To* ROSE.

Rose. Yes, sir, to my sorrow.

Bal. Who was witness?

Bull. That was I—I danced, threw the stocking, and spoke jokes by their bedside, I'm sure.

Bal. Who was the minister?

Bull. Minister! we are soldiers, and want no ministers. They were married by the articles of war.

Bal. Hold thy prating, fool!—[*To* SILVIA.] Your appearance, sir, promises some understanding; pray what does this fellow mean?

Silv. He means marriage, I think—but that you know is so odd a thing, that hardly any two people under the sun agree in the ceremony; some make it a sacrament, others a convenience, and others make it a jest; but among soldiers 'tis most sacred. Our sword, you know, is our honour; that we lay down; the hero jumps over it first, and the amazon after—leap rogue, follow whore—the drum beats a ruff, and so to bed; that's all—the ceremony is concise.

Bull. And the prettiest ceremony, so full of pastime and prodigality!—

Bal. What! are you a soldier?

Bull. Ay, that I am. Will your worship lend me your cane, and I'll show you how I can exercise.

Bal. [*Striking him over the head.*] Take it.—[*To* SILVIA.] Pray, sir, what commission may you bear?

Silv. I'm called captain, sir, by all the coffeemen, drawers, whores, and groom-porters in London; for I wear a red coat, a sword, a hat *bien troussé*, a martial twist in my cravat, a fierce knot in my periwig, a cane upon my button, piquet in my head, and dice in my pocket.

Scale. Your name, pray, sir?

Silv. Captain Pinch: I cock my hat with a pinch, I take snuff with a pinch, pay my whores with a pinch. In short, I can do anything at a pinch, but fight and fill my belly.

Bal. And pray, sir, what brought you into Shropshire?

Silv. A pinch, sir: I knew you country gentlemen want wit, and you know that we town gentlemen want money, and so—

Bal. I understand you, sir.—Here, constable!

Re-enter Constable.

Take this gentleman into custody till farther orders.

Rose. Pray your worship don't be uncivil to him, for he did me no hurt; he's the most harmless man in the world, for all he talks so.

Scale. Come, come, child, I'll take care of you.

Silv. What, gentlemen, rob me of my freedom, and my wife at once! 'Tis the first time they ever went together.

Bal. Heark'ee, constable! [*Whispers him.*

Con. It shall be done, sir.—Come along, sir.

[*Exit with* BULLOCK *and* SILVIA.

Bal. Come, Mr. Scale, we'll manage the spark presently. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—MELINDA'S *Apartment.*

Enter MELINDA *and* WORTHY.

Mel. [*Aside.*] So far the prediction is right, 'tis ten exactly.—[*Aloud.*] And pray, sir, how long have you been in this travelling humour?

Wor. 'Tis natural, madam, for us to avoid what disturbs our quiet.

Mel. Rather the love of change, which is more natural, may be the occasion of it.

Wor. To be sure, madam, there must be charms in variety, else neither you nor I should be so fond of it.

Mel. You mistake, Mr. Worthy, I am not so fond of variety as to travel for't, nor do I think it prudence in you to run yourself into a certain expense and danger, in hopes of precarious pleasures, which at best never answer expectation; as 'tis evident from the example of most travellers, that long more to return to their own country than they did to go abroad.

Wor. What pleasures I may receive abroad are indeed uncertain; but this I am sure of, I shall meet with less cruelty among the most barbarous nations, than I have found at home.

Mel. Come, sir, you and I have been jangling a great while: I fancy if we made up our accounts, we should the sooner come to an agreement.

Wor. Sure, madam, you won't dispute your being in my debt? My fears, sighs, vows, promises, assiduities, anxieties, jealousies, have run on for a whole year without any payment.

Mel. A year! oh, Mr. Worthy! what you owe to me is not to be paid under a seven years' servitude. How did you use me the year before? when, taking the advantage of my innocence and necessity, you would have made me your mistress, that is, your slave. Remember the wicked insinuations, artful baits, deceitful arguments, cunning pretences; then your impudent behaviour, loose expressions, familiar letters, rude visits,—remember those! those, Mr. Worthy!

Wor. [*Aside.*] I do remember, and am sorry I made no better use of 'em.—[*Aloud.*] But you may remember, madam, that—

Mel. Sir, I'll remember nothing—'tis your interest that I should forget: you have been barbarous to me, I have been cruel to you; put that and that together, and let one balance the other. Now if you will begin upon a new score, lay aside your adventuring airs, and behave yourself handsomely till Lent be over; here's my hand, I'll use you as a gentleman should be.

Wor. And if I don't use you as a gentlewoman should be, may this be my poison!

[*Kissing her hand.*

Enter Servant.

Ser. Madam, the coach is at the door. [*Exit.*

Mel. I am going to Mr. Balance's country-house to see my cousin Silvia; I have done her an injury, and can't be easy till I have asked her pardon.

Wor. I dare not hope for the honour of waiting on you.

Mel. My coach is full; but if you will be so gallant as to mount your own horses and follow us, we shall be glad to be overtaken; and if you bring captain Plume with you, we shan't have the worse reception.

Wor. I'll endeavour it. [*Exit, leading* MELINDA.

SCENE IV.—*The Market-Place.*

Enter Captain PLUME *and* Serjeant KITE.

Plume. A baker, a tailor, a smith, and a butcher—I believe the first colony planted in Virginia had not more trades in their company than I have in mine.

Kite. The butcher, sir, will have his hands full; for we have two sheep-stealers among us. I hear of a fellow too committed just now for stealing of horses.

Plume. We'll dispose of him among the dragoons. Have we ne'er a poulterer among us?

Kite. Yes, sir, the king of the gipsies is a very

good one, he has an exellent hand at a goose or a turkey. Here's captain Brazen, sir, I must go look after the men. [*Exit.*

Enter Captain BRAZEN, *reading a letter*.

Braz. Um, um, um, the canonical hour—Um, um, very well.—My dear Plume! give me a buss.

Plume. Half a score, if you will, my dear. What hast got in thy hand, child?

Braz. 'Tis a project for laying out a thousand pound.

Plume. Were it not requisite to project first how to get it in?

Braz. You can't imagine, my dear, that I want twenty thousand pound; I have spent twenty times as much in the service. Now, my dear, pray advise me, my head runs much upon architecture, shall I build a privateer or a playhouse?

Plume. An odd question—a privateer or a playhouse! 'Twill require some consideration.—Faith, I'm for a privateer.

Braz. I'm not of your opinion, my dear.—For in the first place a privateer may be ill built.

Plume. And so may a playhouse.

Braz. But a privateer may be ill manned.

Plume. And so may a playhouse.

Braz. But a privateer may run upon the shallows.

Plume. Not so often as a playhouse.

Braz. But you know a privateer may spring a leak.

Plume. And I know that a playhouse may spring a great many.

Braz. But suppose the privateer come home with a rich booty, we should never agree about our shares.

Plume. 'Tis just so in a playhouse:—so, by my advice, you shall fix upon the privateer.

Braz. Agreed!—But if this twenty thousand should not be in specie—

Plume. What twenty thousand?

Braz. Heark'ee. [*Whispers.*

Plume. Married!

Braz. Presently, we're to meet about half a mile out of town at the water-side—and so forth.—[Reads.] *For fear I should be known by any of Worthy's friends, you must give me leave to wear my mask till after the ceremony, which will make me for ever yours.*—Look'ee there, my dear dog.

[*Shows the bottom of the letter to* PLUME.

Plume. Melinda!—and by this light, her own hand!—Once more, if you please, my dear.—Her hand exactly!—Just now, you say?

Braz. This minute I must be gone.

Plume. Have a little patience, and I'll go with you.

Braz. No, no, I see a gentleman coming this way, that may be inquisitive; 'tis Worthy, do you know him?

Plume. By sight only.

Braz. Have a care, the very eyes discover secrets. [*Exit.*

Enter Mr. WORTHY.

Wor. To boot and saddle, captain, you must mount.

Plume. Whip and spur, Worthy, or you won't mount.

Wor. But I shall: Melinda and I are agreed, she's gone to visit Silvia, we are to mount and follow; and could we carry a parson with us, who knows what might be done for us both?

Plume. Don't trouble your head; Melinda has secured a parson already.

Wor. Already! do you know more than I?

Plume. Yes, I saw it under her hand.—Brazen and she are to meet half a mile hence at the water-side, there to take boat, I suppose to be ferried over to the Elysian fields, if there be any such thing in matrimony.

Wor. I parted with Melinda just now; she assured me she hated Brazen, and that she resolved to discard Lucy for daring to write letters to him in her name.

Plume. Nay, nay, there's nothing of Lucy in this.—I tell ye, I saw Melinda's hand, as surely as this is mine.

Wor. But I tell you, she's gone this minute to justice Balance's country-house.

Plume. But I tell you, she's gone this minute to the water-side.

Enter Servant.

Ser. [*To* WORTHY.] Madam Melinda has sent word, that you need not trouble yourself to follow her, because her journey to justice Balance's is put off, and she's gone to take the air another way.

Wor. How! her journey put off!

Plume. That is, her journey was a put-off to you.

Wor. 'Tis plain, plain!—But how, where, when is she to meet Brazen?

Plume. Just now, I tell you, half a mile hence at the water-side.

Wor. Up or down the water?

Plume. That I don't know.

Wor. I'm glad my horses are ready.—Jack, get 'em out. [*Exit* Servant.

Plume. Shall I go with you?

Wor. Not an inch; I shall return presently.

Plume. You'll find me at the hall; the justices are sitting by this time, and I must attend them.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE V.—*A Court of Justice.*

Justices BALANCE, SCALE, *and* SCRUPLE, *discovered upon the bench;* Serjeant KITE, Constable, *and* Mob, *in attendance.*

Kite. [*Aside to* Constable.] Pray, who are those honourable gentlemen upon the bench?

Con. He in the middle is justice Balance, he on the right is justice Scale, and he on the left is justice Scruple; and I am Mr. Constable:—four very honest gentlemen.

Kite. O dear sir! I am your most obedient servant.—[*Saluting him.*] I fancy, sir, that your employment and mine are much the same; for my business is to keep people in order, and if they disobey, to knock 'em down; and then we are both staff-officers.

Con. Nay, I'm a serjeant myself—of the militia. Come, brother, you shall see me exercise. Suppose this a musket now: now I am shouldered.

[*Puts his staff on his right shoulder.*

Kite. Ay, you are shouldered pretty well for a constable's staff; but for a musket, you must put it on t'other shoulder, my dear.

Con. Adso! that's true.—Come, now give the word of command.

Kite. Silence!

Con. Ay, ay, so we will—we will be silent.

Kite. Silence, you dog, silence!

[*Strikes him over the head with his halberd.*

Con. That's the way to silence a man with a witness! What d'ye mean, friend?

Kite. Only to exercise you, sir.

Con. Your exercise differs so from ours, that we shall ne'er agree about it. If my own captain had given me such a rap, I had taken the law of him.

Enter Captain PLUME.

Bal. Captain, you're welcome.

Plume. Gentlemen, I thank you.

Scrup. Come, honest captain, sit by me.—[PLUME *takes his seat upon the bench.*] Now produce your prisoners.—Here, that fellow there—set him up.—Mr. Constable, what have you to say against this man?

Con. I have nothing to say against him, an please you.

Bal. No! what made you bring him hither?

Con. I don't know, an please your worship.

Scale. Did not the contents of your warrant direct you what sort of men to take up?

Con. I can't tell, an please ye; I can't read.

Scrup. A very pretty constable truly!—I find we have no business here.

Kite. May it please the worshipful bench, I desire to be heard in this case, as being counsel for the queen.

Bal. Come, serjeant, you shall be heard, since nobody else will speak; we won't come here for nothing.

Kite. This man is but one man; the country may spare him, and the army wants him; besides, he's cut out by nature for a grenadier; he's five foot ten inches high; he shall box, wrestle, or dance the Cheshire round with any man in the country; he gets drunk every sabbath day, and he beats his wife.

Wife. You lie, sirrah! you lie!—An please your worship, he's the best-natur'dst, pains-taking'st man in the parish, witness my five poor children.

Scrup. A wife and five children!—You constable, you rogue, how durst you impress a man that has a wife and five children?

Scale. Discharge him! discharge him!

Bal. Hold, gentlemen!—Hark'ee, friend, how do you maintain your wife and children?

Plume. They live upon wildfowl and venison, sir; the husband keeps a gun, and kills all the hares and partridges within five miles round.

Bal. A gun! nay, if he be so good at gunning, he shall have enough on't. He may be of use against the French, for he shoots flying, to be sure.

Scrup. But his wife and children, Mr. Balance!

Wife. Ay, ay, that's the reason you would send him away; you know I have a child every year, and you are afraid they should come upon the parish at last.

Plume. Look'ee there, gentlemen, the honest woman has spoke it at once; the parish had better maintain five children this year, than six or seven the next. That fellow, upon his high feeding, may get you two or three beggars at a birth.

Wife. Look'ee, Mr. Captain, the parish shall get nothing by sending him away, for I won't lose my teeming-time, if there be a man left in the parish.

Bal. Send that woman to the house of correction—and the man—

Kite. I'll take care o' him, if you please.

[*Takes him down.*

Scale. Here, you constable, the next:—set up that black-faced fellow, he has a gunpowder look. What can you say against this man, constable?

Con. Nothing, but that he is a very honest man.

Plume. Pray, gentlemen, let me have one honest man in my company, for the novelty's sake.

Bal. What are you, friend?

Mob. A collier; I work in the coal-pits.

Scrup. Look'ee, gentlemen, this fellow has a trade, and the act of parliament here expresses, that we are to impress no man that has any visible means of a livelihood.

Kite. May it please your worships, this man has no visible means of livelihood, for he works underground.

Plume. Well said, Kite! Besides, the army wants miners.

Bal. Right, and had we an order of government for't, we could raise you in this and the neighbouring county of Stafford, five hundred colliers, that would run you underground like moles, and do more service in a siege than all the miners in the army.

Scrup. Well, friend, what have you to say for yourself?

Mob. I'm married.

Kite. Lack-a-day, so am I!

Mob. Here's my wife, poor woman.

Bal. Are you married, good woman?

Wom. I'm married in conscience.

Kite. May it please your worship, she's with child in conscience.

Scale. Who married you, mistress?

Wom. My husband—we agreed that I should call him husband, to avoid passing for a whore, and that he should call me wife, to shun going for a soldier.

Scrup. A very pretty couple! Pray, captain, will you take 'em both?

Plume. What say you, Mr. Kite? will you take care of the woman?

Kite. Yes, sir; she shall go with us to the seaside, and there, if she has a mind to drown herself, we'll take care that nobody shall hinder her.

Bal. Here, constable, bring in my man.—[*Exit* Constable.] Now, captain, I'll fit you with a man, such as you ne'er listed in your life.

Re-enter Constable *with* SILVIA.

Oh! my friend Pinch, I'm very glad to see you.

Silv. Well, sir, and what then?

Scale. What then! is that your respect to the bench?

Silv. Sir, I don't care a farthing for you nor your bench neither.

Scrup. Look'ee, gentlemen, that's enough: he's a very impudent fellow, and fit for a soldier.

Scale. A notorious rogue, I say, and very fit for a soldier.

Con. A whoremaster, I say, and therefore fit to go.

Bal. What think you, captain?

Plume. I think he's a very pretty fellow, and therefore fit to serve.

Silv. Me for a soldier! send your own lazy, lubberly sons at home, fellows that hazard their

necks every day in pursuit of a fox, yet dare not peep abroad to look an enemy in the face.

Con. May it please your worships, I have a woman at the door to swear a rape against this rogue.

Silv. Is it your wife or daughter, booby? I ravished 'em both yesterday.

Bal. Pray, captain, read the Articles of War, we'll see him listed immediately.

Plume. [Reads.] *Articles of War against mutiny and desertion—*

Silv. Hold, sir!—Once more, gentlemen, have a care what you do, for you shall severely smart for any violence you offer to me; and you, Mr. Balance, I speak to you particularly, you shall heartily repent it.

Plume. Look'ee, young spark, say but one word more, and I'll build a horse for you as high as the ceiling, and make you ride the most tiresome journey that ever you made in your life.

Silv. You have made a fine speech, good captain Huffcap, but you had better be quiet, I shall find a way to cool your courage.

Plume. Pray, gentlemen, don't mind him, he's distracted.

Silv. 'Tis false! I am descended of as good a family as any in your county; my father is as good a man as any upon your bench, and I am heir to twelve hundred pound a year.

Bal. He's certainly mad!—Pray, captain, read the Articles of War.

Silv. Hold once more!—Pray, Mr. Balance, to you I speak, suppose I were your child, would you use me at this rate?

Bal. No, faith, were you mine, I would send you to Bedlam first, and into the army afterwards.

Silv. But consider my father, sir, he's as good, as generous, as brave, as just a man as ever served his country; I'm his only child, perhaps the loss of me may break his heart.

Bal. He's a very great fool if it does.—Captain, if you don't list him this minute, I'll leave the court.

Plume. Kite, do you distribute the levy-money to the men while I read.

Kite. Ay, sir.—Silence, gentlemen!

[Captain PLUME *reads the Articles of War.*

Bal. Very well; now, captain, let me beg the favour of you, not to discharge this fellow upon any account whatsoever.—Bring in the rest.

Con. There are no more, an't please your worship.

Bal. No more! there were five two hours ago.

Silv. 'Tis true, sir, but this rogue of a constable let the rest escape for a bribe of eleven shillings a man; because he said the act allowed him but ten, so the odd shilling was clear gains.

Justices. How!

Silv. Gentlemen, he offered to let me get away for two guineas, but I had not so much about me; this is truth, and I'm ready to swear it.

Kite. And I'll swear it; give me the book, 'tis for the good of the service.

Mob. May it please your worship, I gave him half-a-crown to say that I was an honest man; but now, since that your worships have made me a rogue, I hope I shall have my money again.

Bal. 'Tis my opinion, that this constable be put into the captain's hands, and if his friends don't bring four good men for his ransom by to-morrow night—captain, you shall carry him to Flanders.

Scale. Scrup. Agreed! agreed!

Plume. Mr. Kite, take the constable into custody.

Kite. Ay, ay, sir.—[*To* Constable.] Will you please to have your office taken from you? or will you handsomely lay down your staff, as your betters have done before you? [Constable *drops his staff.*

Bal. Come, gentlemen, there needs no great ceremony in adjourning this court.—Captain, you shall dine with me.

Kite. [*To* CONSTABLE.] Come, Mr. Militia Serjeant, I shall silence you now, I believe, without your taking the law of me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—*The Fields.*

Enter Captain BRAZEN *leading* LUCY *masked.*

Braz. The boat is just below here.

Enter Mr. WORTHY *with a case of pistols under his arm.*

Wor. Here, sir, take your choice.

[*Going between them, and offering the pistols.*

Braz. What! pistols! are they charged, my dear?

Wor. With a brace of bullets each.

Braz. But I'm a foot-officer, my dear, and never use pistols, the sword is my way—and I won't be put out of my road to please any man.

Wor. Nor I neither; so have at you.

[*Cocks one pistol.*

Braz. Look'ee, my dear, I don't care for pistols.—Pray, oblige me, and let us have a bout at sharps; damn it, there's no parrying these bullets!

Wor. Sir, if you han't your bellyfull of these, the swords shall come in for second course.

Braz. Why, then, fire and fury! I have eaten smoke from the mouth of a cannon, sir; don't think I fear powder, for I live upon't. Let me see—[*Takes one.*] And now, sir, how many paces distant shall we fire?

Wor. Fire you when you please, I'll reserve my shot till I am sure of you.

Braz. Come, where's your cloak?

Wor. Cloak! what d'ye mean?

Braz. To fight upon; I always fight upon a cloak, 'tis our way abroad.

Lucy. Come, gentlemen, I'll end the strife.

[*Unmasks.*

Wor. Lucy!—take her.

Braz. The devil take me if I do! Huzza!—[*Fires his pistol.*] D'ye hear, d'ye hear, you plaguy harridan, how those bullets whistle! suppose they had been lodged in my gizzard now!

Lucy. Pray, sir, pardon me.

Braz. I can't tell, child, till I know whether my money be safe.—[*Searching his pockets.*] Yes, yes, I do pardon you, but if I had you in the Rose tavern, Covent-Garden, with three or four hearty rakes, and three or four smart napkins, I would tell you another story, my dear. [*Exit.*

Wor. And was Melinda privy to this?

Lucy. No, sir, she wrote her name upon a piece of paper at the fortune-teller's last night, which I put in my pocket, and so writ above it to the captain.

Wor. And how came Melinda's journey put off?

Lucy. At the town's end she met Mr. Balance's

steward, who told her, that Mrs. Silvia was gone from her father's, and nobody could tell whither.

Wor. Silvia gone from her father's! This will be news to Plume.—Go home, and tell your lady how near I was being shot for her.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE VII.—*A Room in* Justice BALANCE'S *House.*

Enter Justice BALANCE *and* Steward.

Stew. We did not miss her till the evening, sir; and then, searching for her in the chamber that was my young master's, we found her clothes there; but the suit that your son left in the press, when he went to London, was gone.

Bal. The white trimmed with silver?

Stew. The same.

Bal. You han't told that circumstance to anybody?

Stew. To none but your worship.

Bal. And be sure you don't. Go into the dining-room, and tell captain Plume that I beg to speak with him.

Stew. I shall. [*Exit.*

Bal. Was ever man so imposed upon! I had her promise, indeed, that she should never dispose of herself without my consent. I have consented with a witness, given her away as my act and deed. And this, I warrant, the captain thinks will pass; no, I shall never pardon him the villany, first of robbing me of my daughter, and then the mean opinion he must have of me, to think that I could be so wretchedly imposed upon; her extravagant passion might encourage her in the attempt, but the contrivance must be his. I'll know the truth presently.

Enter Captain PLUME.

Pray, captain, what have you done with your young gentleman soldier?

Plume. He's at my quarters, I suppose, with the rest of my men.

Bal. Does he keep company with the common soldiers?

Plume. No, he's generally with me.

Bal. He lies with you, I presume?

Plume. No, faith, I offered him part of my bed; but the young rogue fell in love with Rose, and has lain with her, I think, since he came to town.

Bal. So, that between you both, Rose has been finely managed.

Plume. Upon my honour, sir, she had no harm from me.

Bal. [*Aside.*] All's safe, I find!—[*Aloud.*] Now, captain, you must know that the young fellow's impudence in court was well grounded; he said I should heartily repent his being listed, and so I do from my soul.

Plume. Ay! for what reason?

Bal. Because he is no less than what he said he was, born of as good a family as any in this county, and is heir to twelve hundred pound a year.

Plume. I'm very glad to hear it—for I wanted but a man of that quality to make my company a perfect representative of the whole commons of England.

Bal. Won't you discharge him?

Plume. Not under a hundred pound sterling.

Bal. You shall have it, for his father is my intimate friend.

Plume. Then you shall have him for nothing.

Bal. Nay, sir, you shall have your price.

Plume. Not a penny, sir; I value an obligation to you much above a hundred pound.

Bal. Perhaps, sir, you shan't repent your generosity.—Will you please to write his discharge in my pocket-book?—[*Gives his book.*] In the mean time, we'll send for the gentleman.—Who waits there?

Enter Servant.

Go to the captain's lodging, and inquire for Mr. Wilful, tell him his captain wants him here immediately.

Ser. Sir, the gentleman's below at the door, inquiring for the captain.

Plume. Bid him come up.—[*Exit* Servant.] Here's the discharge, sir.

Bal. Sir, I thank you.—[*Aside.*] 'Tis plain he had no hand in't.

Enter SILVIA.

Silv. I think, captain, you might have used me better than to leave me yonder among your swearing, drunken crew. And you, Mr. Justice, might have been so civil as to have invited me to dinner, for I have eaten with as good a man as your worship.

Plume. Sir, you must charge our want of respect, upon our ignorance of your quality.—But now you are at liberty—I have discharged you.

Silv. Discharged me!

Bal. Yes, sir, and you must once more go home to your father.

Silv. My father! then I am discovered.—O sir! [*Kneeling.*] I expect no pardon.

Bal. Pardon! no, no, child, your crime shall be your punishment.—Here, captain, I deliver her over to the conjugal power for her chastisement; since she will be a wife, be you a husband, a very husband. When she tells you of her love, upbraid her with her folly; be modishly ungrateful, because she has been unfashionably kind, and use her worse than you would anybody else, because you can't use her so well as she deserves.

Plume. And are you Silvia, in good earnest?

Silv. Earnest! I have gone too far to make it a jest, sir.

Plume. And do you give her to me in good earnest?

Bal. If you please to take her, sir.

Plume. Why then I have saved my legs and arms, and lost my liberty; secure from wounds, I am prepared for the gout; farewell subsistence, and welcome taxes!—Sir, my liberty, and hopes of being a general, are much dearer to me than your twelve hundred pound a year.—But to your love, madam, I resign my freedom, and to your beauty my ambition: greater in obeying at your feet, than commanding at the head of an army.

Enter Mr. WORTHY.

Wor. I am sorry to hear, Mr. Balance, that your daughter is lost.

Bal. So am not I, sir, since an honest gentleman has found her.

Enter MELINDA.

Mel. Pray, Mr. Balance, what's become of my cousin Silvia?

Bal. Your cousin Silvia is talking yonder with your cousin Plume.

Mel. Wor. How!

Silv. Do you think it strange, cousin, that a woman should change? but, I hope, you'll excuse a change that has proceeded from constancy. I altered my outside, because I was the same within; and only laid by the woman to make sure of my man; that's my history.

Mel. Your history is a little romantic, cousin, but since success has crowned your adventures, you will have the world o' your side, and I shall be willing to go with the tide, provided you'll pardon an injury I offered you in the letter to your father.

Plume. That injury, madam, was done to me, and the reparation I expect shall be made to my friend; make Mr. Worthy happy, and I shall be satisfied.

Mel. A good example, sir, will go a great way: when my cousin is pleased to surrender, 'tis probable I shan't hold out much longer.

Enter Captain BRAZEN.

Braz. Gentlemen, I am yours.—Madam, I am not yours.

Mel. I'm glad on't, sir.

Braz. So am I.—You have got a pretty house here, Mr. Laconic.

Bal. 'Tis time to right all mistakes.—My name, sir, is Balance.

Braz. Balance! Sir, I am your most obedient!—I know your whole generation. Had not you an uncle that was governor of the Leeward Islands some years ago?

Bal. Did you know him?

Braz. Intimately, sir. He played at billiards to a miracle. You had a brother too, that was captain of a fireship—poor Dick—he had the most engaging way with him—of making punch—and then his cabin was so neat—but his boy Jack was the most comical bastard—ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! a pickled dog, I shall never forget him.

Plume. Well, captain, are you fixed in your project yet? are you still for the privateer?

Braz. No, no, I had enough of a privateer just now; I had like to have been picked up by a cruiser under false colours, and a French pickaroon for aught I know.

Plume. But have you got your recruits, my dear?

Braz. Not a stick, my dear.

Plume. Probably I shall furnish you.

Enter ROSE *and* BULLOCK.

Rose. Captain, captain, I have got loose once more, and have persuaded my sweetheart Cartwheel to go with us; but you must promise not to part with me again.

Silv. I find, Mrs. Rose has not been pleased with her bedfellow.

Rose. Bedfellow! I don't know whether I had a bedfellow or not.

Silv. Don't be in a passion, child, I was as little pleased with your company as you could be with mine.

Bull. Pray, sir, dunna be offended at my sister, she's something underbred; but if you please, I'll lie with you in her stead.

Plume. I have promised, madam, to provide for this girl; now will you be pleased to let her wait upon you? or shall I take care of her?

Silv. She shall be my charge, sir; you may find it business enough to take care of me.

Bull. Ay, and of me, captain; for wauns! if ever you lift your hand against me, I'll desert.

Plume. Captain Brazen shall take care o' that.—[*To* Captain BRAZEN.] My dear, instead of the twenty thousand pound you talked of, you shall have the twenty brave recruits that I have raised, at the rate they cost me.—My commission I lay down, to be taken up by some braver fellow, that has more merit and less good fortune, whilst I endeavour, by the example of this worthy gentleman, to serve my queen and country at home.

With some regret I quit the active field,
Where glory full reward for life does yield;
But the recruiting trade, with all its train
Of lasting plague, fatigue, and endless pain,
I gladly quit, with my fair spouse to stay,
And raise recruits the matrimonial way.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

All ladies and gentlemen that are willing to see the comedy, called the *Recruiting Officer*, let them repair to-morrow night, by six o'clock, to the sign of the Theatre-Royal in Drury-lane, and they shall be kindly entertained.

We scorn the vulgar ways to bid you come,
Whole Europe now obeys the call of drum.
The soldier, not the poet, here appears,
And beats up for a corps of volunteers:
He finds that music chiefly does delight ye,
And therefore chooses music to invite ye.

Beat the Grenadier March.—Row, row, tow!—Gentlemen, this piece of music, called *An Overture to a Battle*, was composed by a famous Italian master, and was performed with wonderful success at the great operas of Vigo, Schellenberg, and Blenheim; it came off with the applause of all Europe, excepting France; the French found it a little too rough for their *delicatesse*.

Some that have acted on those glorious stages,
Are here to witness to succeeding ages,
That no music like the grenadier's engages.

Ladies, we must own, that this music of ours is not altogether so soft as Bononcini's; yet, we dare affirm, that it has laid more people asleep than all the *Camillas* in the world; and, you'll condescend to own, that it keeps one awake better than any opera that ever was acted.

The Grenadier March seems to be a composure excellently adapted to the genius of the English, for no music was ever followed so far by us, nor with so much alacrity; and, with all deference to the present subscription, we must say, that the Grenadier March has been subscribed for by the whole Grand Alliance: and, we presume to inform the ladies, that it always has the pre-eminence abroad, and is constantly heard by the tallest, handsomest men in the whole army. In short, to gratify the present taste, our author is now adapting some words to the Grenadier March, which he intends to have performed to-morrow, if the lady who is to sing it should not happen to be sick.

This he concludes to be the surest way
To draw you hither; for you'll all obey
Soft music's call, though you should damn his play.

THE BEAUX-STRATAGEM.

A Comedy.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The reader may find some faults in this play, which my illness prevented the amending of; but there is great amends made in the representation, which cannot be matched, no more than the friendly and indefatigable care of Mr. Wilks, to whom I chiefly owe the success of the play,

G. FARQUHAR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Aimwell, } *two Gentlemen of broken Fortunes, the first*
Archer, } *as Master, and the second as Servant.*
Count Bellair, *a French Officer, Prisoner at Lichfield.*
Squire Sullen, *a Country Blockhead, brutal to his Wife.*
Sir Charles Freeman, *Brother to* Mrs. Sullen.
Foigard, *a Priest, Chaplain to the French Officers.*
Boniface, *an Innkeeper.*
Gibbet, }
Hounslow, } *three Highwaymen.*
Bagshot, }
Scrub, *Servant to* Squire Sullen.

Lady Bountiful, *an old, civil, Country Gentlewoman, that cures all her Neighbours of all distempers, and foolishly fond of her Son* Squire Sullen.
Dorinda, *Daughter to* Lady Bountiful.
Mrs. Sullen, *Wife to* Squire Sullen.
Gipsy, *Maid to the Ladies.*
Cherry, *Daughter to* Boniface.

Tapster, Coach-passengers, Countryman, Countrywoman, *and* Servants.

SCENE,—Lichfield.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. WILKS.

When strife disturbs, or sloth corrupts an age,
Keen satire is the business of the stage.
When the Plain-Dealer writ, he lash'd those crimes,
Which then infested most the modish times:
But now, when faction sleeps, and sloth is fled,
And all our youth in active fields are bred;
When through Great Britain's fair extensive round,
The trumps of fame, the notes of union sound;
When Anna's sceptre points the laws their course,
And her example gives her precepts force:
There scarce is room for satire; all our lays
Must be, or songs of triumph, or of praise.
But as in grounds best cultivated, tares
And poppies rise among the golden ears;
Our product so, fit for the field or school,
Must mix with nature's favourite plant—a fool:
A weed that has to twenty summers ran,
Shoots up in stalk, and vegetates to man.
Simpling our author goes from field to field,
And culls such fools as may diversion yield;
And, thanks to nature, there's no want of those,
For rain or shine, the thriving coxcomb grows.
Follies to-night we show ne'er lash'd before,
Yet such as nature shows you every hour;
Nor can the pictures give a just offence,
For fools are made for jests to men of sense.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* BONIFACE'S *Inn*.

Enter BONIFACE *running*.

Bon. Chamberlain! maid! Cherry! daughter Cherry! all asleep? all dead?

Enter CHERRY *running*.

Cher. Here, here! why d'ye bawl so, father? d'ye think we have no ears?

Bon. You deserve to have none, you young minx! The company of the Warrington coach has stood in the hall this hour, and nobody to show them to their chambers.

Cher. And let 'em wait, father; there's neither red-coat in the coach, nor footman behind it.

Bon. But they threaten to go to another inn tonight.

Cher. That they dare not, for fear the coachman should overturn them to-morrow.—Coming! coming!—Here's the London coach arrived.

Enter Coach-passengers *with trunks, bandboxes, and other luggage, and cross the stage.*

Bon. Welcome, ladies!

Cher. Very welcome, gentlemen!—Chamberlain, show the Lion and the Rose. [*Exit with the company.*

Enter AIMWELL *and* ARCHER, *the latter carrying a portmantle.*

Bon. This way, this way, gentlemen!

Aim. [*To* ARCHER.] Set down the things; go to the stable, and see my horses well rubbed.

Arch. I shall, sir. [*Exit.*

Aim. You're my landlord, I suppose?

Bon. Yes, sir, I'm old Will. Boniface, pretty well known upon this road, as the saying is.

Aim. O Mr. Boniface, your servant!

Bon. O sir!—What will your honour please to drink, as the saying is?

Aim. I have heard your town of Lichfield much famed for ale; I think I'll taste that.

Bon. Sir, I have now in my cellar ten tun of the best ale in Staffordshire; 'tis smooth as oil, sweet as milk, clear as amber, and strong as brandy; and will be just fourteen year old the fifth day of next March, old style.

Aim. You're very exact, I find, in the age of your ale.

Bon. As punctual, sir, as I am in the age of my children. I'll show you such ale!—Here, tapster, broach number 1706, as the saying is.—Sir, you shall taste my *Anno Domini*.—I have lived in Lichfield, man and boy, above eight-and-fifty years, and, I believe, have not consumed eight-and-fifty ounces of meat.

Aim. At a meal, you mean, if one may guess your sense by your bulk.

Bon. Not in my life, sir, I have fed purely upon ale; I have eat my ale, drank my ale, and I always sleep upon ale.

Enter Tapster *with a bottle and glass, and exit.*

Now, sir, you shall see!—[*Pours out a glass.*] Your worship's health.—Ha! delicious, delicious! fancy it burgundy, only fancy it, and 'tis worth ten shillings a quart.

Aim. [*Drinks.*] 'Tis confounded strong!

Bon. Strong! it must be so, or how should we be strong that drink it?

Aim. And have you lived so long upon this ale, landlord?

Bon. Eight-and-fifty years, upon my credit, sir—but it killed my wife, poor woman, as the saying is.

Aim. How came that to pass?

Bon. I don't know how, sir; she would not let the ale take its natural course, sir; she was for qualifying it every now and then with a dram, as the saying is; and an honest gentleman that came this way from Ireland, made her a present of a dozen bottles of usquebaugh—but the poor woman was never well after: but, howe'er, I was obliged to the gentleman, you know.

Aim. Why, was it the usquebaugh that killed her?

Bon. My lady Bountiful said so. She, good lady, did what could be done; she cured her of three tympanies, but the fourth carried her off. But she's happy, and I'm contented, as the saying is.

Aim. Who's that lady Bountiful you mentioned?

Bon. Ods my life, sir, we'll drink her health.—[*Drinks.*] My lady Bountiful is one of the best of women. Her last husband, sir Charles Bountiful, left her worth a thousand pound a year; and, I believe, she lays out one-half on't in charitable uses for the good of her neighbours. She cures rheumatisms, ruptures, and broken shins in men; green-sickness, obstructions, and fits of the mother, in women; the king's evil, chincough, and chilblains, in children: in short, she has cured more people in and about Lichfield within ten years than the doctors have killed in twenty; and that's a bold word.

Aim. Has the lady been any other way useful in her generation?

Bon. Yes, sir; she has a daughter by sir Charles, the finest woman in all our country, and the greatest fortune. She has a son too, by her first husband, squire Sullen, who married a fine lady from London t'other day; if you please, sir, we'll drink his health.

Aim. What sort of a man is he?

Bon. Why, sir, the man's well enough; says little, thinks less, and does—nothing at all, faith. But he's a man of great estate, and values nobody.

Aim. A sportsman, I suppose?

Bon. Yes, sir, he's a man of pleasure; he plays at whisk and smokes his pipe eight-and-forty hours together sometimes.

Aim. And married, you say?

Bon. Ay, and to a curious woman, sir. But he's a—he wants it; here, sir. [*Pointing to his forehead.*

Aim. He has it there, you mean?

Bon. That's none of my business; he's my landlord, and so a man, you know, would not—But—ecod, he's no better than—Sir, my humble service to you.—[*Drinks.*] Though I value not a farthing what he can do to me; I pay him his rent at quarter-day; I have a good running-trade;

I have but one daughter, and I can give her—but no matter for that.

Aim. You're very happy, Mr. Boniface. Pray, what other company have you in town?

Bon. A power of fine ladies; and then we have the French officers.

Aim. Oh, that's right, you have a good many of those gentlemen: pray, how do you like their company?

Bon. So well, as the saying is, that I could wish we had as many more of 'em; they're full of money, and pay double for everything they have. They know, sir, that we paid good round taxes for the taking of 'em, and so they are willing to reimburse us a little. One of 'em lodges in my house.

Re-enter ARCHER.

Arch. Landlord, there are some French gentlemen below that ask for you.

Bon. I'll wait on 'em.—[*Aside to* ARCHER.] Does your master stay long in town, as the saying is?

Arch. I can't tell, as the saying is.

Bon. Come from London?

Arch. No.

Bon. Going to London, mayhap?

Arch. No.

Bon. [*Aside.*] An odd fellow this.—[*To* AIMWELL.] I beg your worship's pardon, I'll wait on you in half a minute. [*Exit.*

Aim. The coast's clear, I see.—Now, my dear Archer, welcome to Lichfield.

Arch. I thank thee, my dear brother in iniquity.

Aim. Iniquity! prithee, leave canting; you need not change your style with your dress.

Arch. Don't mistake me, Aimwell, for 'tis still my maxim, that there is no scandal like rags, nor any crime so shameful as poverty.

Aim. The world confesses it every day in its practice, though men won't own it for their opinion. Who did that worthy lord, my brother, single out of the side-box to sup with him t'other night?

Arch. Jack Handicraft, a handsome, well-dressed, mannerly, sharping rogue, who keeps the best company in town.

Aim. Right! And, pray, who married my lady Manslaughter t'other day, the great fortune?

Arch. Why, Nick Marrabone, a professed pick-pocket, and a good bowler; but he makes a handsome figure, and rides in his coach, that he formerly used to ride behind.

Aim. But did you observe poor Jack Generous in the Park last week?

Arch. Yes, with his autumnal periwig, shading his melancholy face, his coat older than anything but its fashion, with one hand idle in his pocket, and with the other picking his useless teeth; and, though the Mall was crowded with company, yet was poor Jack as single and solitary as a lion in a desert.

Aim. And as much avoided, for no crime upon earth but the want of money.

Arch. And that's enough. Men must not be poor; idleness is the root of all evil; the world's wide enough, let 'em bustle. Fortune has taken the weak under her protection, but men of sense are left to their industry.

Aim. Upon which topic we proceed, and, I think, luckily hitherto. Would not any man swear now, that I am a man of quality, and you my servant, when if our intrinsic value were known—

Arch. Come, come, we are the men of intrinsic value who can strike our fortunes out of ourselves, whose worth is independent of accidents in life, or revolutions in government; we have heads to get money and hearts to spend it.

Aim. As to our hearts, I grant ye, they are as willing tits as any within twenty degrees; but I can have no great opinion of our heads from the service they have done us hitherto, unless it be that they have brought us from London hither to Lichfield, made me a lord and you my servant.

Arch. That's more than you could expect already. But what money have we left?

Aim. But two hundred pound.

Arch. And our horses, clothes, rings, &c.—Why, we have very good fortunes now for moderate people; and, let me tell you, that this two hundred pound, with the experience that we are now masters of, is a better estate than the ten we have spent. Our friends, indeed, began to suspect that our pockets were low, but we came off with flying colours, showed no signs of want either in word or deed.

Aim. Ay, and our going to Brussels was a good pretence enough for our sudden disappearing; and, I warrant you, our friends imagine that we are gone a-volunteering.

Arch. Why, faith, if this prospect fails, it must e'en come to that. I am for venturing one of the hundreds, if you will, upon this knight-errantry; but, in case it should fail, we'll reserve the t'other to carry us to some counterscarp, where we may die, as we lived, in a blaze.

Aim. With all my heart; and we have lived justly, Archer; we can't say that we have spent our fortunes, but that we have enjoyed 'em.

Arch. Right! so much pleasure for so much money. We have had our pennyworths; and, had I millions, I would go to the same market again. —O London! London!—Well, we have had our share, and let us be thankful: past pleasures, for aught I know, are best, such as we are sure of; those to come may disappoint us.

Aim. It has often grieved the heart of me to see how some inhuman wretches murder their kind fortunes; those that, by sacrificing all to one appetite, shall starve all the rest. You shall have some that live only in their palates, and in their sense of tasting shall drown the other four: others are only epicures in appearances, such who shall starve their nights to make a figure a days, and famish their own to feed the eyes of others: a contrary sort confine their pleasures to the dark, and contract their spacious acres to the circuit of a muff-string.

Arch. Right! But they find the Indies in that spot where they consume 'em, and, I think, your kind keepers have much the best on't; for they indulge the most senses by one expense, there's the seeing, hearing, and feeling, amply gratified; and, some philosophers will tell you, that from such a commerce there arises a sixth sense, that gives infinitely more pleasure than the other five put together.

Aim. And to pass to the other extremity, of all keepers I think those the worst that keep their money.

Arch. Those are the most miserable wights in being, they destroy the rights of nature, and disap-

point the blessings of Providence. Give me a man that keeps his five senses keen and bright as his sword, that has 'em always drawn out in their just order and strength, with his reason, as commander at the head of 'em, that detaches 'em by turns upon whatever party of pleasure agreeably offers, and commands 'em to retreat upon the least appearance of disadvantage or danger! For my part, I can stick to my bottle while my wine, my company, and my reason, holds good; I can be charmed with Sappho's singing without falling in love with her face: I love hunting, but would not, like Actæon, be eaten up by my own dogs; I love a fine house, but let another keep it; and just so I love a fine woman.

Aim. In that last particular you have the better of me.

Arch. Ay, you're such an amorous puppy, that I'm afraid you'll spoil our sport; you can't counterfeit the passion without feeling it.

Aim. Though the whining part be out of doors in town, 'tis still in force with the country ladies: and let me tell you, Frank, the fool in that passion shall outdo the knave at any time.

Arch. Well, I won't dispute it now; you command for the day, and so I submit: at Nottingham, you know, I am to be master.

Aim. And at Lincoln, I again.

Arch. Then, at Norwich I mount, which, I think, shall be our last stage; for, if we fail there, we'll embark for Holland, bid adieu to Venus, and welcome Mars.

Aim. A match!—Mum!

Re-enter BONIFACE.

Bon. What will your worship please to have for supper?

Aim. What have you got?

Bon. Sir, we have a delicate piece of beef in the pot, and a pig at the fire.

Aim. Good supper-meat, I must confess. I can't eat beef, landlord.

Arch. And I hate pig.

Aim. Hold your prating, sirrah! do you know who you are?

Bon. Please to bespeak something else; I have everything in the house.

Aim. Have you any veal?

Bon. Veal! sir, we had a delicate loin of veal on Wednesday last.

Aim. Have you got any fish or wildfowl?

Bon. As for fish, truly, sir, we are an inland town, and indifferently provided with fish, that's the truth on't; and then for wildfowl—we have a delicate couple of rabbits.

Aim. Get me the rabbits fricasseed.

Bon. Fricasseed! Lard, sir, they'll eat much better smothered with onions.

Arch. Psha! damn your onions!

Aim. Again, sirrah!—Well, landlord, what you please. But hold, I have a small charge of money, and your house is so full of strangers, that I believe it may be safer in your custody than mine; for when this fellow of mine gets drunk he minds nothing.—Here, sirrah, reach me the strong-box.

Arch. Yes, sir.—[*Aside.*] This will give us a reputation. [*Gives* AIMWELL *a box.*

Aim. Here, landlord; the locks are sealed down both for your security and mine; it holds somewhat above two hundred pound; if you doubt it, I'll count it to you after supper; but be sure you lay it where I may have it at a minute's warning; for my affairs are a little dubious at present; perhaps I may be gone in half an hour, perhaps I may be your guest till the best part of that be spent; and pray order your ostler to keep my horses always saddled. But one thing above the rest I must beg, that you would let this fellow have none of your *Anno Domini*, as you call it; for he's the most insufferable sot.—Here, sirrah, light me to my chamber. [*Exit, lighted by* ARCHER.

Bon. Cherry! daughter Cherry!

Re-enter CHERRY.

Cher. D'ye call, father?

Bon. Ay, child, you must lay by this box for the gentleman; 'tis full of money.

Cher. Money! all that money! why, sure, father, the gentleman comes to be chosen parliament-man. Who is he?

Bon. I don't know what to make of him; he talks of keeping his horses ready saddled, and of going perhaps at a minute's warning, or of staying perhaps till the best part of this be spent.

Cher. Ay, ten to one, father, he's a highwayman.

Bon. A highwayman! upon my life, girl, you have hit it, and this box is some new-purchased booty. Now, could we find him out, the money were ours.

Cher. He don't belong to our gang.

Bon. What horses have they?

Cher. The master rides upon a black.

Bon. A black! ten to one the man upon the black mare; and since he don't belong to our fraternity, we may betray him with a safe conscience: I don't think it lawful to harbour any rogues but my own. Look'ee, child, as the saying is, we must go cunningly to work, proofs we must have; the gentleman's servant loves drink, I'll ply him that way, and ten to one loves a wench; you must work him t'other way.

Cher. Father, would you have me give my secret for his?

Bon. Consider, child, there's two hundred pound to boot.—[*Ringing without.*] Coming! coming!—Child, mind your business. [*Exit.*

Cher. What a rogue is my father! My father! I deny it. My mother was a good, generous, free-hearted woman, and I can't tell how far her good-nature might have extended for the good of her children. This landlord of mine, for I think I can call him no more, would betray his guest, and debauch his daughter into the bargain—by a footman too!

Re-enter ARCHER.

Arch. What footman, pray, mistress, is so happy as to be the subject of your contemplation?

Cher. Whoever he is, friend, he'll be but little the better for't.

Arch. I hope so, for, I'm sure, you did not think of me.

Cher. Suppose I had?

Arch. Why then you're but even with me; for the minute I came in, I was a-considering in what manner I should make love to you.

Cher. Love to me, friend!

Arch. Yes, child.

Cher. Child! manners!—If you kept a little more distance, friend, it would become you much better.

Arch. Distance! good night, sauce-box. [*Going.*

Cher. [*Aside.*] A pretty fellow! I like his pride.—[*Aloud.*] Sir, pray, sir, you see, sir, [ARCHER *returns.*] I have the credit to be entrusted with your master's fortune here, which sets me a degree above his footman; I hope, sir, you an't affronted?

Arch. Let me look you full in the face, and I'll tell you whether you can affront me or no. 'Sdeath, child, you have a pair of delicate eyes, and you don't know what to do with 'em!

Cher. Why, sir, don't I see everybody?

Arch. Ay, but if some women had 'em, they would kill everybody. Prithee, instruct me, I would fain make love to you, but I don't know what to say.

Cher. Why, did you never make love to anybody before?

Arch. Never to a person of your figure, I can assure you, madam; my addresses have been always confined to people within my own sphere, I never aspired so high before. [*Sings.*

But you look so bright,
And are dress'd so tight,
That a man would swear you're right,
As arm was e'er laid over.
Such an air
You freely wear
To ensnare,
As makes each guest a lover!

Since then, my dear, I'm your guest,
Prithee give me of the best
Of what is ready drest:
Since then, my dear, &c.

Cher. [*Aside.*] What can I think of this man?—[*Aloud.*] Will you give me that song, sir?

Arch. Ay, my dear, take it while 'tis warm.—[*Kisses her.*] Death and fire! her lips are honeycombs.

Cher. And I wish there had been bees too, to have stung you for your impudence.

Arch. There's a swarm of Cupids, my little Venus, that has done the business much better.

Cher. [*Aside.*] This fellow is misbegotten as well as I.—[*Aloud.*] What's your name, sir?

Arch. [*Aside.*] Name! egad, I have forgot it.—[*Aloud.*] Oh! Martin.

Cher. Where were you born?

Arch. In St. Martin's parish.

Cher. What was your father?

Arch. St. Martin's parish.

Cher. Then, friend, good night.

Arch. I hope not.

Cher. You may depend upon't.

Arch. Upon what?

Cher. That you're very impudent.

Arch. That you're very handsome.

Cher. That you're a footman.

Arch. That you're an angel.

Cher. I shall be rude.

Arch. So shall I. [*Seizes her hand.*

Cher. Let go my hand.

Arch. Give me a kiss. [*Kisses her.*

Bon. [*Without.*] Cherry! Cherry!

Cher. I'm—my father calls; you plaguy devil, how durst you stop my breath so? Offer to follow me one step, if you dare. [*Exit.*

Arch. A fair challenge, by this light! this is a pretty fair opening of an adventure; but we are knight-errants, and so Fortune be our guide. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Gallery in* Lady BOUNTIFUL'S *House.*

Enter MRS. SULLEN *and* DORINDA *meeting.*

Dor. Morrow, my dear sister; are you for church this morning?

Mrs. Sul. Anywhere to pray; for Heaven alone can help me. But I think, Dorinda, there's no form of prayer in the liturgy against bad husbands.

Dor. But there's a form of law in Doctors-Commons; and I swear, sister Sullen, rather than see you thus continually discontented, I would advise you to apply to that: for besides the part that I bear in your vexatious broils, as being sister to the husband, and friend to the wife, your example gives me such an impression of matrimony, that I shall be apt to condemn my person to a long vacation all its life. But supposing, madam, that you brought it to a case of separation, what can you urge against your husband? My brother is, first, the most constant man alive.

Mrs. Sul. The most constant husband, I grant ye.

Dor. He never sleeps from you.

Mrs. Sul. No, he always sleeps with me.

Dor. He allows you a maintenance suitable to your quality.

Mrs. Sul. A maintenance! do you take me, madam, for an hospital child, that I must sit down, and bless my benefactors for meat, drink, and clothes? As I take it, madam, I brought your brother ten thousand pounds, out of which I might expect some pretty things, called pleasures.

Dor. You share in all the pleasures that the country affords.

Mrs. Sul. Country pleasures! racks and torments! Dost think, child, that my limbs were made for leaping of ditches, and clambering over stiles? or that my parents, wisely foreseeing my future happiness in country-pleasures, had early instructed me in rural accomplishments of drinking fat ale, playing at whisk, and smoking tobacco with my husband? or of spreading of plasters, brewing of diet-drinks, and stilling rosemary-water, with the good old gentlewoman my mother-in-law?

Dor. I'm sorry, madam, that it is not more in our power to divert you; I could wish, indeed, that our entertainments were a little more polite, or your taste a little less refined. But, pray, madam, how came the poets and philosophers, that laboured so much in hunting after pleasure, to place it at last in a country life?

Mrs. Sul. Because they wanted money, child, to find out the pleasures of the town. Did you ever see a poet or philosopher worth ten thousand pound? if you can show me such a man, I'll lay you fifty pound you'll find him somewhere within

the weekly bills. Not that I disapprove rural pleasures, as the poets have painted them; in their landscape, every Phillis has her Corydon, every murmuring stream, and every flowery mead, gives fresh alarms to love. Besides, you'll find, that their couples were never married:—but yonder I see my Corydon, and a sweet swain it is, Heaven knows! Come, Dorinda, don't be angry, he's my husband, and your brother; and between both, is he not a sad brute?

Dor. I have nothing to say to your part of him, you're the best judge.

Mrs. Sul. O sister, sister! if ever you marry, beware of a sullen, silent sot, one that's always musing, but never thinks. There's some diversion in a talking blockhead; and since a woman must wear chains, I would have the pleasure of hearing 'em rattle a little. Now you shall see, but take this by the way. He came home this morning at his usual hour of four, wakened me out of a sweet dream of something else, by tumbling over the tea-table, which he broke all to pieces; after his man and he had rolled about the room, like sick passengers in a storm, he comes flounce into bed, dead as a salmon into a fishmonger's basket; his feet cold as ice, his breath hot as a furnace, and his hands and his face as greasy as his flannel nightcap. O matrimony! He tosses up the clothes with a barbarous swing over his shoulders, disorders the whole economy of my bed, leaves me half naked, and my whole night's comfort is the tuneable serenade of that wakeful nightingale, his nose! Oh, the pleasure of counting the melancholy clock by a snoring husband! But now, sister, you shall see how handsomely, being a well-bred man, he will beg my pardon.

Enter Squire SULLEN.

Squire Sul. My head aches consumedly.

Mrs. Sul. Will you be pleased, my dear, to drink tea with us this morning? it may do your head good.

Squire Sul. No.

Dor. Coffee, brother?

Squire Sul. Psha!

Mrs. Sul. Will you please to dress, and go to church with me? the air may help you.

Squire Sul. Scrub! [*Calls.*

Enter SCRUB.

Scrub. Sir!

Squire Sul. What day o'th' week is this?

Scrub. Sunday, an't please your worship.

Squire Sul. Sunday! bring me a dram; and d'ye hear, set out the venison-pasty, and a tankard of strong beer upon the hall-table, I'll go to breakfast. [*Going.*

Dor. Stay, stay, brother, you shan't get off so; you were very naught last night, and must make your wife reparation; come, come, brother, won't you ask pardon?

Squire Sul. For what?

Dor. For being drunk last night.

Squire Sul. I can afford it, can't I?

Mrs. Sul. But I can't, sir.

Squire Sul. Then you may let it alone.

Mrs. Sul. But I must tell you, sir, that this is not to be borne.

Squire Sul. I'm glad on't.

Mrs. Sul. What is the reason, sir, that you use me thus inhumanly?

Squire Sul. Scrub!

Scrub. Sir!

Squire Sul. Get things ready to shave my head. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Sul. Have a care of coming near his temples, Scrub, for fear you meet something there that may turn the edge of your razor.—[*Exit* SCRUB.] Inveterate stupidity! did you ever know so hard, so obstinate a spleen as his? O sister, sister! I shall never ha' good of the beast till I get him to town; London, dear London, is the place for managing and breaking a husband.

Dor. And has not a husband the same opportunities there for humbling a wife?

Mrs. Sul. No, no, child, 'tis a standing maxim in conjugal discipline, that when a man would enslave his wife, he hurries her into the country; and when a lady would be arbitrary with her husband she wheedles her booby up to town. A man dare not play the tyrant in London, because there are so many examples to encourage the subject to rebel. O Dorinda! Dorinda! a fine woman may do anything in London: o' my conscience, she may raise an army of forty thousand men.

Dor. I fancy, sister, you have a mind to be trying your power that way here in Lichfield; you have drawn the French count to your colours already.

Mrs. Sul. The French are a people that can't live without their gallantries.

Dor. And some English that I know, sister, are not averse to such amusements.

Mrs. Sul. Well, sister, since the truth must out, it may do as well now as hereafter; I think, one way to rouse my lethargic, sottish husband, is to give him a rival: security begets negligence in all people, and men must be alarmed to make 'em alert in their duty. Women are like pictures, of no value in the hands of a fool, till he hears men of sense bid high for the purchase.

Dor. This might do, sister, if my brother's understanding were to be convinced into a passion for you; but, I fancy, there's a natural aversion of his side; and I fancy, sister, that you don't come much behind him, if you dealt fairly.

Mrs. Sul. I own it, we are united contradictions, fire and water: but I could be contented, with a great many other wives, to humour the censorious mob, and give the world an appearance of living well with my husband, could I bring him but to dissemble a little kindness to keep me in countenance.

Dor. But how do you know, sister, but that, instead of rousing your husband by this artifice to a counterfeit kindness, he should awake in a real fury?

Mrs. Sul. Let him: if I can't entice him to the one, I would provoke him to the other.

Dor. But how must I behave myself between ye?

Mrs. Sul. You must assist me.

Dor. What, against my own brother?

Mrs. Sul. He's but half a brother, and I'm your entire friend. If I go a step beyond the bounds of honour, leave me; till then, I expect you should go along with me in everything; while I trust my honour in your hands, you may trust your brother's in mine. The count is to dine here to-day.

Dor. 'Tis a strange thing, sister, that I can't like that man.

Mrs. Sul. You like nothing; your time is not come; love and death have their fatalities, and strike home one time or other: you'll pay for all one day, I warrant ye. But come, my lady's tea is ready, and 'tis almost church time. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* BONIFACE'S *Inn.*

AIMWELL *and* ARCHER *discovered.*

Aim. And was she the daughter of the house?

Arch. The landlord is so blind as to think so; but I dare swear she has better blood in her veins.

Aim. Why dost think so?

Arch. Because the baggage has a pert *je ne sais quoi;* she reads plays, keeps a monkey, and is troubled with vapours.

Aim. By which discoveries I guess that you know more of her.

Arch. Not yet, faith; the lady gives herself airs; forsooth, nothing under a gentleman!

Aim. Let me take her in hand.

Arch. Say one word more o' that, and I'll declare myself, spoil your sport there, and everywhere else; look ye, Aimwell, every man in his own sphere.

Aim. Right; and therefore you must pimp for your master.

Arch. In the usual forms, good sir, after I have served myself.—But to our business. You are so well dressed, Tom, and make so handsome a figure, that I fancy you may do execution in a country church; the exterior part strikes first, and you're in the right to make that impression favourable.

Aim. There's something in that which may turn to advantage. The appearance of a stranger in a country church draws as many gazers as a blazing-star; no sooner he comes into the cathedral, but a train of whispers runs buzzing round the congregation in a moment: *Who is he? Whence comes he? Do you know him?* Then I, sir, tips me the verger with half-a-crown; he pockets the simony, and inducts me into the best pew in the church; I pull out my snuffbox, turn myself round, bow to the bishop, or the dean, if he be the commanding-officer; single out a beauty, rivet both my eyes to hers, set my nose a-bleeding by the strength of imagination, and show the whole church my concern, by my endeavouring to hide it; after the sermon, the whole town gives me to her for a lover, and by persuading the lady that I am a-dying for her, the tables are turned, and she in good earnest falls in love with me.

Arch. There's nothing in this, Tom, without a precedent; but instead of riveting your eyes to a beauty, try to fix 'em upon a fortune; that's our business at present.

Aim. Psha! no woman can be a beauty without a fortune. Let me alone, for I am a marksman.

Arch. Tom!

Aim. Ay.

Arch. When were you at church before, pray?

Aim. Um—I was there at the coronation.

Arch. And how can you expect a blessing by going to church now?

Aim. Blessing! nay, Frank, I ask but for a wife. [*Exit.*

Arch. Truly, the man is not very unreasonable in his demands. [*Exit at the opposite door.*

SCENE III.—*Another Room in the same.*

BONIFACE *and* CHERRY *discovered.*

Bon. Well, daughter, as the saying is, have you brought Martin to confess?

Cher. Pray, father, don't put me upon getting anything out of a man; I'm but young, you know, father, and I don't understand wheedling.

Bon. Young! why, you jade, as the saying is, can any woman wheedle that is not young? your mother was useless at five-and-twenty. Not wheedle! would you make your mother a whore, and me a cuckold, as the saying is? I tell you, his silence confesses it, and his master spends his money so freely, and is so much a gentleman every manner of way, that he must be a highwayman.

Enter GIBBET.

Gib. Landlord, landlord, is the coast clear?

Bon. O Mr. Gibbet, what's the news?

Gib. No matter, ask no questions, all fair and honourable.—Here, my dear Cherry.—[*Gives her a bag.*] Two hundred sterling pounds, as good as any that ever hanged or saved a rogue; lay 'em by with the rest; and here—three wedding or mourning rings, 'tis much the same you know—here, two silver-hilted swords; I took those from fellows that never show any part of their swords but the hilts—here is a diamond necklace which the lady hid in the privatest place in the coach, but I found it out—this gold watch I took from a pawnbroker's wife; it was left in her hands by a person of quality, there's the arms upon the case.

Cher. But who had you the money from?

Gib. Ah! poor woman! I pitied her;—from a poor lady just eloped from her husband. She had made up her cargo, and was bound for Ireland, as hard as she could drive; she told me of her husband's barbarous usage, and so I left her half-a-crown. But I had almost forgot, my dear Cherry, I have a present for you.

Cher. What is't?

Gib. A pot of ceruse, my child, that I took out of a lady's under-pocket.

Cher. What, Mr. Gibbet, do you think that I paint?

Gib. Why, you jade, your betters do; I'm sure the lady that I took it from had a coronet upon her handkerchief. Here, take my cloak, and go, secure the premises.

Cher. I will secure 'em. [*Exit.*

Bon. But, heark'ee, where's Hounslow and Bagshot?

Gib. They'll be here to-night.

Bon. D'ye know of any other gentlemen o' the pad on this road?

Gib. No.

Bon. I fancy that I have two that lodge in the house just now.

Gib. The devil! how d'ye smoke 'em?

Bon. Why, the one is gone to church.

Gib. That's suspicious, I must confess.

Bon. And the other is now in his master's chamber; he pretends to be servant to the other, we'll call him out and pump him a little.

Gib. With all my heart.

Bon. Mr. Martin, Mr. Martin! [*Calls.*

Enter ARCHER *combing a periwig, and singing.*

Gib. The roads are consumed deep, I'm as dirty as old Brentford at Christmas.—A good pretty fellow that; whose servant are you, friend?

Arch. My master's.

Gib. Really!

Arch. Really.

Gib. That's much.—The fellow has been at the bar by his evasions.—But, pray, sir, what is your master's name?

Arch. Tall, all, dall!—[*Sings and combs the periwig.*] This is the most obstinate curl—

Gib. I ask you his name?

Arch. Name, sir—tall, all, dall!—I never asked him his name in my life.—Tall, all, dall!

Bon. What think you now? [*Aside to* GIBBET.

Gib. [*Aside to* BONIFACE.] Plain, plain, he talks now as if he were before a judge.—[*To* ARCHER.] But pray, friend, which way does your master travel?

Arch. A-horseback.

Gib. [*Aside.*] Very well again, an old offender, right.—[*To* ARCHER.] But, I mean, does he go upwards or downwards?

Arch. Downwards, I fear, sir.—Tall, all!

Gib. I'm afraid my fate will be a contrary way.

Bon. Ha! ha! ha! Mr. Martin, you're very arch. This gentleman is only travelling towards Chester, and would be glad of your company, that's all.—Come, captain, you'll stay to-night, I suppose? I'll show you a chamber—come, captain.

Gib. Farewell, friend!

Arch. Captain, your servant.—[*Exeunt* BONIFACE *and* GIBBET.] Captain! a pretty fellow! 'Sdeath, I wonder that the officers of the army don't conspire to beat all scoundrels in red but their own.

Re-enter CHERRY.

Cher. [*Aside.*] Gone, and Martin here! I hope he did not listen; I would have the merit of the discovery all my own, because I would oblige him to love me.—[*Aloud.*] Mr. Martin, who was that man with my father?

Arch. Some recruiting serjeant, or whipped-out trooper, I suppose.

Cher. All's safe, I find. [*Aside.*

Arch. Come, my dear, have you conned over the catechise I taught you last night?

Cher. Come, question me.

Arch. What is love?

Cher. Love is I know not what, it comes I know not how, and goes I know not when.

Arch. Very well, an apt scholar.—[*Chucks her under the chin.*] Where does love enter?

Cher. Into the eyes.

Arch. And where go out?

Cher. I won't tell ye.

Arch. What are the objects of that passion?

Cher. Youth, beauty, and clean linen.

Arch. The reason?

Cher. The two first are fashionable in nature, and the third at court.

Arch. That's my dear.—[*Pats her cheek.*] What are the signs and tokens of that passion?

Cher. A stealing look, a stammering tongue, words improbable, designs impossible, and actions impracticable.

Arch. That's my good child, kiss me.—What must a lover do to obtain his mistress?

Cher. He must adore the person that disdains him, he must bribe the chambermaid that betrays him, and court the footman that laughs at him. He must—he must—

Arch. Nay, child, I must whip you if you don't mind your lesson; he must treat his—

Cher. O ay!—he must treat his enemies with respect, his friends with indifference, and all the world with contempt; he must suffer much, and fear more; he must desire much, and hope little; in short, he must embrace his ruin, and throw himself away.

Arch. Had ever man so hopeful a pupil as mine!—Come, my dear, why is love called a riddle?

Cher. Because, being blind, he leads those that see, and, though a child, he governs a man.

Arch. Mighty well!—And why is Love pictured blind?

Cher. Because the painters out of the weakness or privilege of their art chose to hide those eyes that they could not draw.

Arch. That's my dear little scholar, kiss me again.—And why should Love, that's a child, govern a man?

Cher. Because that a child is the end of love.

Arch. And so ends Love's catechism.—And now, my dear, we'll go in and make my master's bed.

Cher. Hold, hold, Mr. Martin! You have taken a great deal of pains to instruct me, and what d'ye think I have learned by it?

Arch. What?

Cher. That your discourse and your habit are contradictions, and it would be nonsense in me to believe you a footman any longer.

Arch. 'Oons, what a witch it is!

Cher. Depend upon this, sir, nothing in this garb shall ever tempt me; for, though I was born to servitude, I hate it. Own your condition, swear you love me, and then—

Arch. And then we shall go make the bed?

Cher. Yes.

Arch. You must know then, that I am born a gentleman, my education was liberal; but I went to London a younger brother, fell into the hands of sharpers, who stripped me of my money, my friends disowned me, and now my necessity brings me to what you see.

Cher. Then take my hand—promise to marry me before you sleep, and I'll make you master of two thousand pounds.

Arch. How!

Cher. Two thousand pounds that I have this minute in my own custody; so, throw off your livery this instant, and I'll go find a parson.

Arch. What said you? a parson!

Cher. What! do you scruple?

Arch. Scruple! no, no, but—Two thousand pound, you say?

Cher. And better.

Arch. [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, what shall I do?—[*Aloud.*] But heark'ee, child, what need you make me master of yourself and money, when you may have the same pleasure out of me, and still keep your fortune in your hands.

Cher. Then you won't marry me?

Arch. I would marry you, but—

Cher. O, sweet sir, I'm your humble servant, you're fairly caught! Would you persuade me that any gentleman who could bear the scandal of wearing a livery would refuse two thousand pound,

let the condition be what it would? no, no, sir. But I hope you'll pardon the freedom I have taken, since it was only to inform myself of the respect that I ought to pay you.

Arch. [*Aside.*] Fairly bit, by Jupiter!—[*Aloud.*] Hold! hold!—And have you actually two thousand pounds?

Cher. Sir, I have my secrets as well as you; when you please to be more open I shall be more free, and be assured that I have discoveries that will match yours, be what they will. In the mean while, be satisfied that no discovery I make shall ever hurt you, but beware of my father! [*Exit.*

Arch. So! we're like to have as many adventures in our inn as Don Quixote had in his. Let me see—two thousand pounds—if the wench would promise to die when the money were spent, egad, one would marry her; but the fortune may go off in a year or two, and the wife may live—Lord knows how long. Then an innkeeper's daughter; ay, that's the devil—there my pride brings me off.

For whatsoe'er the sages charge on pride,
The angels' fall, and twenty faults beside,
On earth, I'm sure, 'mong us of mortal calling,
Pride saves man oft, and woman too, from falling.
[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Gallery in* Lady Bountiful's *House.*

Enter Mrs. Sullen *and* Dorinda.

Mrs. Sul. Ha! ha! ha! my dear sister, let me embrace thee! now we are friends indeed; for I shall have a secret of yours as a pledge for mine—now you'll be good for something, I shall have you conversable in the subjects of the sex.

Dor. But do you think that I am so weak as to fall in love with a fellow at first sight?

Mrs. Sul. Psha! now you spoil all; why should not we be as free in our friendships as the men? I warrant you, the gentleman has got to his confidant already, has avowed his passion, toasted your health, called you ten thousand angels, has run over your lips, eyes, neck, shape, air, and everything, in a description that warms their mirth to a second enjoyment.

Dor. Your hand, sister, I an't well.

Mrs. Sul. So—she's breeding already—come, child, up with it—hem a little—so—now tell me, don't you like the gentleman that we saw at church just now?

Dor. The man's well enough.

Mrs. Sul. Well enough! is he not a demigod, a Narcissus, a star, the man i'the moon?

Dor. O sister, I'm extremely ill!

Mrs. Sul. Shall I send to your mother, child, for a little of her cephalic plaster to put to the soles of your feet, or shall I send to the gentleman for something for you? Come, unlace your stays, unbosom yourself. The man is perfectly a pretty fellow, I saw him when he first came into church.

Dor. I saw him too, sister, and with an air that shone, methought, like rays about his person.

Mrs. Sul. Well said, up with it!

Dor. No forward coquette behaviour, no airs to set him off, no studied looks nor artful posture,—but nature did it all—

Mrs. Sul. Better and better!—one touch more—come!

Dor. But then his looks—did you observe his eyes?

Mrs. Sul. Yes, yes, I did.—His eyes, well, what of his eyes?

Dor. Sprightly, but not wandering; they seemed to view, but never gazed on anything but me.—And then his looks so humble were, and yet so noble, that they aimed to tell me that he could with pride die at my feet, though he scorned slavery anywhere else.

Mrs. Sul. The physic works purely!—How d'ye find yourself now, my dear?

Dor. Hem! much better, my dear.—Oh, here comes our Mercury!

Enter Scrub.

Well, Scrub, what news of the gentleman?

Scrub. Madam, I have brought you a packet of news.

Dor. Open it quickly, come.

Scrub. In the first place I inquired who the gentleman was; they told me he was a stranger. Secondly, I asked what the gentleman was; they answered and said, that they never saw him before. Thirdly, I inquired what countryman he was; they replied, 'twas more than they knew. Fourthly, I demanded whence he came; their answer was, they could not tell. And, fifthly, I asked whither he went; and they replied, they knew nothing of the matter,—and this is all I could learn.

Mrs. Sul. But what do the people say? can't they guess?

Scrub. Why, some think he's a spy, some guess he's a mountebank, some say one thing, some another; but, for my own part, I believe he's a Jesuit.

Dor. A Jesuit! why a Jesuit?

Scrub. Because he keeps his horses always ready saddled, and his footman talks French.

Mrs. Sul. His footman!

Scrub. Ay, he and the count's footman were gabbering French like two intriguing ducks in a mill-pond; and I believe they talked of me, for they laughed consumedly.

Dor. What sort of livery has the footman?

Scrub. Livery! Lord, madam, I took him for a captain, he's so bedizzened with lace! And then he has tops to his shoes, up to his mid leg, a silver-headed cane dangling at his knuckles; he carries his hands in his pockets just so—[*Walks about foppishly,*] and has a fine long periwig tied up in a bag.—Lord, madam, he's clear another sort of man than I!

Mrs. Sul. That may easily be.—But what shall we do now, sister?

Dor. I have it—this fellow has a world of sim-

plicity, and some cunning, the first hides the latter by abundance.—Scrub!

Scrub. Madam!

Dor. We have a great mind to know who this gentleman is, only for our satisfaction.

Scrub. Yes, madam, it would be a satisfaction, no doubt.

Dor. You must go and get acquainted with his footman, and invite him hither to drink a bottle of your ale because you're butler to-day.

Scrub. Yes, madam, I am butler every Sunday.

Mrs. Sul. O brave! sister, o' my conscience, you understand the mathematics already. 'Tis the best plot in the world; your mother, you know, will be gone to church, my spouse will be got to the alehouse with his scoundrels, and the house will be our own—so we drop in by accident, and ask the fellow some questions ourselves. In the country, you know, any stranger is company, and we're glad to take up with the butler in a country-dance and happy if he'll do us the favour.

Scrub. O madam, you wrong me! I never refused your ladyship the favour in my life.

Enter GIPSY.

Gip. Ladies, dinner's upon table.

Dor. Scrub, we'll excuse your waiting—go where we ordered you.

Scrub. I shall. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* BONIFACE's *Inn.*

AIMWELL *and* ARCHER *discovered.*

Arch. Well, Tom, I find you're a marksman.

Aim. A marksman! who so blind could be, as not discern a swan among the ravens?

Arch. Well, but heark'ee, Aimwell!

Aim. Aimwell! call me Oroondates, Cesario, Amadis, all that romance can in a lover paint, and then I'll answer. O Archer! I read her thousands in her looks, she looked like Ceres in her harvest: corn, wine and oil, milk and honey, gardens, groves, and purling streams, played on her plenteous face.

Arch. Her face! her pocket, you mean; the corn, wine and oil, lies there. In short, she has ten thousand pound, that's the English on't.

Aim. Her eyes!—

Arch. Are demi-canons, to be sure; so I won't stand their battery. [*Going.*

Aim. Pray excuse me, my passion must have vent.

Arch. Passion! what a plague, d'ye think these romantic airs will do our business? Were my temper as extravagant as yours, my adventures have something more romantic by half.

Aim. Your adventures!

Arch. Yes,

The nymph that with her twice ten hundred pounds,
With brazen engine hot, and quoif clear starched,
Can fire the guest in warming of the bed—

There's a touch of sublime Milton for you, and the subject but an innkeeper's daughter! I can play with a girl as an angler does with his fish; he keeps it at the end of his line, runs it up the stream, and down the stream, till, at last, he brings it to hand, tickles the trout, and so whips it into his basket.

Enter BONIFACE.

Bon. Mr. Martin, as the saying is—yonder's an honest fellow below, my lady Bountiful's butler, who begs the honour that you would go home with him and see his cellar.

Arch. Do my *baise-mains* to the gentleman, and tell him I will do myself the honour to wait on him immediately. [*Exit* BONIFACE.

Aim. What do I hear?
Soft Orpheus play, and fair Toftida sing!

Arch. Psha! damn your raptures; I tell you, here's a pump going to be put into the vessel, and the ship will get into harbour, my life on't. You say, there's another lady very handsome there?

Aim. Yes, faith.

Arch. I'm in love with her already.

Aim. Can't you give me a bill upon Cherry in the mean time?

Arch. No, no, friend, all her corn, wine and oil, is ingrossed to my market. And once more I warn you, to keep your anchorage clear of mine; for if you fall foul of me, by this light you shall go to the bottom! What! make prize of my little frigate, while I am upon the cruise for you!—

Aim. Well, well, I won't.—[*Exit* ARCHER.]

Re-enter BONIFACE.

Landlord, have you any tolerable company in the house, I don't care for dining alone?

Bon. Yes, sir, there's a captain below, as the saying is, that arrived about an hour ago.

Aim. Gentlemen of his coat are welcome everywhere; will you make him a compliment from me, and tell him I should be glad of his company?

Bon. Who shall I tell him, sir, would—

Aim. [*Aside.*] Ha! that stroke was well thrown in!—[*Aloud.*] I'm only a traveller, like himself, and would be glad of his company, that's all.

Bon. I obey your commands, as the saying is. [*Exit.*

Re-enter ARCHER.

Arch. 'Sdeath! I had forgot; what title will you give yourself?

Aim. My brother's, to be sure; he would never give me any thing else, so I'll make bold with his honour this bout:—you know the rest of your cue.

Arch. Ay, ay. [*Exit.*

Enter GIBBET.

Gib. Sir, I'm yours.

Aim. 'Tis more than I deserve, sir, for I don't know you.

Gib. I don't wonder at that, sir, for you never saw me before—[*Aside*] I hope.

Aim. And pray, sir, how came I by the honour of seeing you now?

Gib. Sir, I scorn to intrude upon any gentleman—but my landlord—

Aim. O sir, I ask your pardon, you're the captain he told me of?

Gib. At your service, sir.

Aim. What regiment, may I be so bold?

Gib. A marching regiment, sir, an old corps.

Aim. [*Aside.*] Very old, if your coat be regimental.—[*Aloud.*] You have served abroad, sir?

Gib. Yes, sir, in the plantations, 'twas my lot to be sent into the worst service; I would have quitted it indeed, but a man of honour, you know—Besides, 'twas for the good of my country that I

should be abroad:—anything for the good of one's country—I'm a Roman for that.

Aim. [*Aside.*] One of the first; I'll lay my life. [*Aloud.*] You found the West Indies very hot, sir?

Gib. Ay, sir, too hot for me.

Aim. Pray, sir, han't I seen your face at Will's coffee-house?

Gib. Yes, sir, and at White's too.

Aim. And where is your company now, captain?

Gib. They han't come yet.

Aim. Why, d'ye expect 'em here?

Gib. They'll be here to-night, sir.

Aim. Which way do they march?

Gib. Across the country.—[*Aside.*] The devil's in't, if I han't said enough to encourage him to declare! But I'm afraid he's not right, I must tack about.

Aim. Is your company to quarter in Lichfield?

Gib. In this house, sir.

Aim. What! all?

Gib. My company's but thin, ha! ha! ha! we are but three, ha! ha! ha!

Aim. You're merry, sir.

Gib. Ay, sir, you must excuse me, sir, I understand the world, especially the art of travelling: I don't care, sir, for answering questions directly upon the road—for I generally ride with a charge about me.

Aim. Three or four, I believe. [*Aside.*

Gib. I am credibly informed that there are highwaymen upon this quarter, not, sir, that I could suspect a gentleman of your figure—but truly, sir, I have got such a way of evasion upon the road, that I don't care for speaking truth to any man.

Aim. [*Aside.*] Your caution may be necessary. —[*Aloud.*] Then I presume you're no captain?

Gib. Not I, sir, captain is a good travelling name, and so I take it; it stops a great many foolish inquiries that are generally made about gentlemen that travel, it gives a man an air of something, and makes the drawers obedient:—and thus far I am a captain, and no farther.

Aim. And pray, sir, what is your true profession?

Gib. O sir, you must excuse me!—upon my word, sir, I don't think it safe to tell ye.

Aim. Ha! ha! ha! upon my word, I commend you.

Re-enter BONIFACE.

Well, Mr. Boniface, what's the news?

Bon. There's another gentleman below, as the saying is, that hearing you were but two, would be glad to make the third man, if you would give him leave.

Aim. What is he?

Bon. A clergyman, as the saying is.

Aim. A clergyman! is he really a clergyman? or, is it only his travelling name, as my friend the captain has it?

Bon. O sir, he's a priest, and chaplain to the French officers in town.

Aim. Is he a Frenchman?

Bon. Yes, sir, born at Brussels.

Gib. A Frenchman, and a priest! I won't be seen in his company, sir; I have a value for my reputation, sir.

Aim. Nay, but, captain, since we are by ourselves—can he speak English, landlord?

Bon. Very well, sir; you may know him, as the saying is, to be a foreigner by his accent, and that's all.

Aim. Then he has been in England before?

Bon. Never, sir; but he's a master of languages, as the saying is; he talks Latin—it does me good to hear him talk Latin.

Aim. Then you understand Latin, Mr. Boniface?

Bon. Not I, sir, as the saying is; but he talks it so very fast, that I'm sure it must be good.

Aim. Pray, desire him to walk up.

Bon. Here he is, as the saying is.

Enter FOIGARD.

Foi. Saave you, gentlemens, bote.

Aim. [*Aside.*] A Frenchman!—[*To* FOIGARD.] Sir, your most humble servant.

Foi. Och, dear joy, I am your most faithful shervant, and yours alsho.

Gib. Doctor, you talk very good English, but you have a mighty twang of the foreigner.

Foi. My English is very vel for the vords, but we foreigners, you know, cannot bring our tongues about the pronunciation so soon.

Aim. [*Aside.*] A foreigner! a downright Teague, by this light!—[*Aloud.*] Were you born in France, doctor?

Foi. I was educated in France, but I was borned at Brussels; I am a subject of the king of Spain, joy.

Gib. What king of Spain, sir? speak!

Foi. Upon my shoul, joy, I cannot tell you as yet.

Aim. Nay, captain, that was too hard upon the doctor, he's a stranger.

Foi. Oh, let him alone, dear joy, I am of a nation that is not easily put out of countenance.

Aim. Come, gentlemen, I'll end the dispute.—Here, landlord, is dinner ready?

Bon. Upon the table, as the saying is.

Aim. Gentlemen—pray—that door—

Foi. No, no, fait, the captain must lead.

Aim. No, doctor, the church is our guide.

Gib. Ay, ay, so it is. [*Exit, the others following.*

SCENE III.—*The Gallery in* Lady BOUNTIFUL'S *House.*

Enter ARCHER *and* SCRUB *singing, and hugging one another; the latter with a tankard in his hand.* GIPSY *listening behind.*

Scrub. Tall, all, dall!—Come, my dear boy, let's have that song once more.

Arch. No, no, we shall disturb the family.—But will you be sure to keep the secret?

Scrub. Pho! upon my honour, as I'm a gentleman.

Arch. 'Tis enough. You must know then, that my master is the lord viscount Aimwell; he fought a duel t'other day in London, wounded his man so dangerously, that he thinks fit to withdraw till he hears whether the gentleman's wounds be mortal or not. He never was in this part of England before, so he chose to retire to this place, that's all.

Gip. And that's enough for me. [*Exit.*

Scrub. And where were you when your master fought?

Arch. We never know of our masters' quarrels.

Scrub. No! if our masters in the country here receive a challenge, the first thing they do is to tell their wives; the wife tells the servants, the servants

alarm the tenants, and in half an hour you shall have the whole county in arms.

Arch. To hinder two men from doing what they have no mind for.—But if you should chance to talk now of my business?

Scrub. Talk! ay, sir, had I not learned the knack of holding my tongue, I had never lived so long in a great family.

Arch. Ay, ay, to be sure there are secrets in all families.

Scrub. Secrets! ay;—but I'll say no more. Come, sit down, we'll make an end of our tankard: here— [*Gives* ARCHER *the tankard.*

Arch. With all my heart; who knows but you and I may come to be better acquainted, eh? Here's your ladies' healths; you have three, I think, and to be sure there must be secrets among 'em. [*Drinks.*

Scrub. Secrets! ay, friend.—I wish I had a friend!—

Arch. Am not I your friend? come, you and I will be sworn brothers.

Scrub. Shall we?

Arch. From this minute. Give me a kiss:—and now, brother Scrub—

Scrub. And now, brother Martin, I will tell you a secret that will make your hair stand an end. You must know that I am consumedly in love.

Arch. That's a terrible secret, that's the truth on't.

Scrub. That jade, Gipsy, that was with us just now in the cellar, is the arrantest whore that ever wore a petticoat; and I'm dying for love of her.

Arch. Ha! ha! ha!—Are you in love with her person or her virtue, brother Scrub?

Scrub. I should like virtue best, because it is more durable than beauty: for virtue holds good with some women long, and many a day after they have lost it.

Arch. In the country, I grant ye, where no woman's virtue is lost, till a bastard be found.

Scrub. Ay, could I bring her to a bastard, I should have her all to myself; but I dare not put it upon that lay, for fear of being sent for a soldier. Pray, brother, how do you gentlemen in London like that same pressing act?

Arch. Very ill, brother Scrub; 'tis the worst that ever was made for us. Formerly I remember the good days, when we could dun our masters for our wages, and if they refused to pay us, we could have a warrant to carry 'em before a justice: but now if we talk of eating, they have a warrant for us, and carry us before three justices.

Scrub. And to be sure we go, if we talk of eating; for the justices won't give their own servants a bad example. Now this is my misfortune—I dare not speak in the house, while that jade Gipsy dings about like a fury.—Once I had the better end of the staff.

Arch. And how comes the change now?

Scrub. Why, the mother of all this mischief is a priest.

Arch. A priest!

Scrub. Ay, a damned son of a whore of Babylon, that came over hither to say grace to the French officers, and eat up our provisions. There's not a day goes over his head without a dinner or supper in this house.

Arch. How came he so familiar in the family?

Scrub. Because he speaks English as if he had lived here all his life, and tells lies as if he had been a traveller from his cradle.

Arch. And this priest, I'm afraid, has converted the affections of your Gipsy.

Scrub. Converted! ay, and perverted, my dear friend: for, I'm afraid, he has made her a whore and a papist! But this is not all; there's the French count and Mrs. Sullen, they're in the confederacy, and for some private ends of their own to be sure.

Arch. A very hopeful family yours, brother Scrub! I suppose the maiden lady has her lover too?

Scrub. Not that I know: she's the best on 'em, that's the truth on't: but they take care to prevent my curiosity, by giving me so much business, that I'm a perfect slave. What d'ye think is my place in this family?

Arch. Butler, I suppose.

Scrub. Ah, Lord help you! I'll tell you. Of a Monday I drive the coach, of a Tuesday I drive the plough, on Wednesday I follow the hounds, a Thursday I dun the tenants, on Friday I go to market, on Saturday I draw warrants, and a Sunday I draw beer.

Arch. Ha! ha! ha! if variety be a pleasure in life, you have enough on't, my dear brother.

Enter MRS. SULLEN *and* DORINDA.

But what ladies are those?

Scrub. Ours, ours; that upon the right hand is Mrs. Sullen, and the other is Mrs. Dorinda. Don't mind 'em, sit still, man.

Mrs. Sul. I have heard my brother talk of my lord Aimwell; but they say that his brother is the finer gentleman.

Dor. That's impossible, sister.

Mrs. Sul. He's vastly rich, but very close, they say.

Dor. No matter for that; if I can creep into his heart, I'll open his breast, I warrant him: I have heard say, that people may be guessed at by the behaviour of their servants; I could wish we might talk to that fellow.

Mrs. Sul. So do I; for, I think he's a very pretty fellow. Come this way, I'll throw out a lure for him presently.

[DORINDA *and* MRS. SULLEN *walks towards the opposite side of the stage.*

Arch. [*Aside.*] Corn, wine, and oil indeed!—But, I think, the wife has the greatest plenty of flesh and blood; she should be my choice.—Ay, ay, say you so!—[MRS. SULLEN *drops her glove, which he picks up and presents to her.*] Madam—your ladyship's glove.

Mrs. Sul. O sir, I thank you!—[*To* DORINDA.] What a handsome bow the fellow has!

Dor. Bow! why I have known several footmen come down from London set up here for dancing-masters, and carry off the best fortunes in the country.

Arch. [*Aside.*] That project, for aught I know, had been better than ours.—[*To* SCRUB.] Brother Scrub, why don't you introduce me?

Scrub. Ladies, this is the strange gentleman's servant that you see at church to-day; I understood he came from London, and so I invited him to the cellar, that he might show me the newest flourish in whetting my knives.

Dor. And I hope you have made much of him?

Arch. O yes, madam, but the strength of your

ladyship's liquor is a little too potent for the constitution of your humble servant.

Mrs. Sul. What then, you don't usually drink ale?

Arch. No, madam; my constant drink is tea, or a little wine and water. 'Tis prescribed me by the physician for a remedy against the spleen.

Scrub. O la! O la! a footman have the spleen!

Mrs. Sul. I thought that distemper had been only proper to people of quality?

Arch. Madam, like all other fashions it wears out, and so descends to their servants; though in a great many of us, I believe, it proceeds from some melancholy particles in the blood, occasioned by the stagnation of wages.

Dor. [*Aside to* MRS. SULLEN.] How affectedly the fellow talks!—[*To* ARCHER.] How long, pray, have you served your present master?

Arch. Not long; my life has been mostly spent in the service of the ladies.

Mrs. Sul. And pray, which service do you like best?

Arch. Madam, the ladies pay best; the honour of serving them is sufficient wages; there is a charm in their looks that delivers a pleasure with their commands, and gives our duty the wings of inclination.

Mrs. Sul. [*Aside.*] That flight was above the pitch of a livery.—[*Aloud.*] And, sir, would not you be satisfied to serve a lady again?

Arch. As a groom of the chamber, madam, but not as a footman.

Mrs. Sul. I suppose you served as footman before?

Arch. For that reason I would not serve in that post again; for my memory is too weak for the load of messages that the ladies lay upon their servants in London. My lady Howd'ye, the last mistress I served, called me up one morning, and told me, Martin, go to my lady Allnight with my humble service; tell her I was to wait on her ladyship yesterday, and left word with Mrs. Rebecca, that the preliminaries of the affair she knows of, are stopped till we know the concurrence of the person that I know of, for which there are circumstances wanting which we shall accommodate at the old place; but that in the mean time there is a person about her ladyship, that from several hints and surmises, was accessary at a certain time to the disappointments that naturally attend things, that to her knowledge are of more importance—

Mrs. Sul. Dor. Ha! ha! ha! where are you going, sir?

Arch. Why, I han't half done!—The whole howd'ye was about half an hour long; so I happened to misplace two syllables, and was turned off, and rendered incapable.

Dor. [*Aside to* MRS. SULLEN.] The pleasantest fellow, sister, I ever saw!—[*To* ARCHER.] But, friend, if your master be married, I presume you still serve a lady?

Arch. No, madam, I take care never to come into a married family; the commands of the master and mistress are always so contrary, that 'tis impossible to please both.

Dor. There's a main point gained: my lord is not married I find. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Sul. But, I wonder, friend, that in so many good services, you had not a better provision made for you.

Arch. I don't know how, madam. I had a lieutenancy offered me three or four times; but that is not bread, madam—I live much better as I do.

Scrub. Madam, he sings rarely! I was thought to do pretty well here in the country till he came; but alack a day, I'm nothing to my brother Martin!

Dor. Does he?—Pray, sir, will you oblige us with a song?

Arch. Are you for passion or humour?

Scrub. O le! he has the purest ballad about a trifle—

Mrs. Sul. A trifle! pray, sir, let's have it.

Arch. I'm ashamed to offer you a trifle, madam; but since you command me— [*Sings.*

A trifling song you shall hear,
Begun with a trifle and ended:
All trifling people draw near,
And I shall be nobly attended.

Were it not for trifles, a few,
That lately have come into play;
The men would want something to do,
And the women want something to say.

What makes men trifle in dressing?
Because the ladies (they know)
Admire, by often possessing,
That eminent trifle a beau.

When the lover his moments has trifled,
The trifle of trifles to gain:
No sooner the virgin is rifled,
But a trifle shall part 'em again.

What mortal man would be able
At White's half an hour to sit?
Or who could bear a tea-table,
Without talking of trifles for wit?

The court is from trifles secure,
Gold keys are no trifles, we see:
White rods are no trifles, I'm sure,
Whatever their bearers may be.

But if you will go to the place,
Where trifles abundantly breed,
The levee will show you his grace
Makes promises trifles indeed.

A coach with six footmen behind,
I count neither trifle nor sin:
But, ye gods! how oft do we find
A scandalous trifle within.

A flask of champagne, people think it
A trifle, or something as bad:
But if you'll contrive how to drink it,
You'll find it no trifle, egad!

A parson's a trifle at sea,
A widow's a trifle in sorrow:
A peace is a trifle to-day,
Who knows what may happen to-morrow!

A black coat a trifle may cloke,
Or to hide it, the red may endeavour:
But if once the army is broke,
We shall have more trifles than ever.

The stage is a trifle, they say,
The reason, pray carry along,
Because at every new play,
The house they with trifles so throng.

But with people's malice to trifle,
And to set us all on a foot:
The author of this is a trifle,
And his song is a trifle to boot.

Mrs. Sul. Very well, sir, we're obliged to you.—Something for a pair of gloves.

[*Offering him money.*

Arch. I humbly beg leave to be excused: my master, madam, pays me; nor dare I take money from any other hand, without injuring his honour, and disobeying his commands. [*Exit with* SCRUB.

Dor. This is surprising! Did you ever see so pretty a well-bred fellow?

Mrs. Sul. The devil take him for wearing that livery!

Dor. I fancy, sister, he may be some gentleman, a friend of my lord's, that his lordship has pitched upon for his courage, fidelity, and discretion, to bear him company in this dress, and who ten to one was his second too.

Mrs. Sul. It is so, it must be so, and it shall be so!—for I like him.

Dor. What! better than the count?

Mrs. Sul. The count happened to be the most agreeable man upon the place; and so I chose him to serve me in my design upon my husband. But I should like this fellow better in a design upon myself.

Dor. But now, sister, for an interview with this lord and this gentleman; how shall we bring that about?

Mrs. Sul. Patience! you country ladies give no quarter if once you be entered. Would you prevent their desires, and give the fellows no wishing-time? Look'ee, Dorinda, if my lord Aimwell loves you or deserves you, he'll find a way to see you, and there we must leave it. My business comes now upon the tapis. Have you prepared your brother?

Dor. Yes, yes.

Mrs. Sul. And how did he relish it?

Dor. He said little, mumbled something to himself, promised to be guided by me—but here he comes.

Enter Squire SULLEN.

Squire Sul. What singing was that I heard just now?

Mrs. Sul. The singing in your head, my dear, you complained of it all day.

Squire Sul. You're impertinent.

Mrs. Sul. I was ever so, since I became one flesh with you.

Squire Sul. One flesh! rather two carcasses joined unnaturally together.

Mrs. Sul. Or rather a living soul coupled to a dead body.

Dor. So, this is fine encouragement for me!

Squire Sul. Yes, my wife shows you what you must do.

Mrs. Sul. And my husband shows you what you must suffer.

Squire Sul. 'Sdeath, why can't you be silent?

Mrs. Sul. 'Sdeath, why can't you talk?

Squire Sul. Do you talk to any purpose?

Mrs. Sul. Do you think to any purpose?

Squire Sul. Sister, heark'ee!—[*Whispers.*] I shan't be home till it be late. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Sul. What did he whisper to ye?

Dor. That he would go round the back way, come into the closet, and listen as I directed him. But let me beg you once more, dear sister, to drop this project; for as I told you before, instead of awaking him to kindness, you may provoke him to a rage; and then who knows how far his brutality may carry him?

Mrs. Sul. I'm provided to receive him, I warrant you. But here comes the count, vanish! [*Exit* DORINDA.

Enter Count BELLAIR.

Don't you wonder, monsieur le comte, that I was not at church this afternoon?

Count Bel. I more wonder, madam, that you go dere at all, or how you dare to lift those eyes to heaven that are guilty of so much killing.

Mrs. Sul. If Heaven, sir, has given to my eyes with the power of killing the virtue of making a cure, I hope the one may atone for the other.

Count Bel. Oh, largely, madam, would your ladyship be as ready to apply the remedy as to give the wound. Consider, madam, I am doubly a prisoner; first to the arms of your general, then to your more conquering eyes. My first chains are easy, there a ransom may redeem me, but from your fetters I never shall get free.

Mrs. Sul. Alas, sir! why should you complain to me of your captivity, who am in chains myself? You know, sir, that I am bound, nay, must be tied up in that particular that might give you ease: I am like you, a prisoner of war,—of war, indeed—I have given my parole of honour; would you break yours to gain your liberty?

Count Bel. Most certainly I would, were I a prisoner among the Turks; dis is your case, you're a slave, madam, slave to the worst of Turks, a husband.

Mrs. Sul. There lies my foible, I confess; no fortifications, no courage, conduct, nor vigilancy, can pretend to defend a place, where the cruelty of the governor forces the garrison to mutiny.

Count Bel. And where de besieger is resolved to die before de place.—Here will I fix;—[*Kneels*] with tears, vows, and prayers assault your heart, and never rise till you surrender; or if I must storm—Love and St. Michael!—And so I begin the attack.

Mrs. Sul. Stand off!—[*Aside.*] Sure he hears me not!—And I could almost wish—he did not!—The fellow makes love very prettily.—[*Aloud.*] But, sir, why should you put such a value upon my person, when you see it despised by one that knows it so much better?

Count Bel. He knows it not, though he possesses it; if he but knew the value of the jewel he is master of, he would always wear it next his heart, and sleep with it in his arms.

Mrs. Sul. But since he throws me unregarded from him—

Count Bel. And one that knows your value well comes by and takes you up, is not justice?

[*Goes to lay hold of her.*

Enter Squire SULLEN *with his sword drawn.*

Squire Sul. Hold, villain, hold!

Mrs. Sul. [*Presenting a pistol.*] Do you hold!

Squire Sul. What! murder your husband, to defend your bully!

Mrs. Sul. Bully! for shame, Mr. Sullen, bullies wear long swords, the gentleman has none, he's a prisoner, you know. I was aware of your outrage, and prepared this to receive your violence; and, if occasion were, to preserve myself against the force of this other gentleman.

Count Bel. O madam, your eyes be bettre firearms than your pistol; they nevre miss.

Squire Sul. What! court my wife to my face!

Mrs. Sul. Pray, Mr. Sullen, put up; suspend your fury for a minute.

Squire Sul. To give you time to invent an excuse!

Mrs. Sul. I need none.

Squire Sul. No, for I heard every syllable of your discourse.

Count Bel. Ah! and begar, I tink the dialogue was vera pretty.

Mrs. Sul. Then I suppose, sir, you heard something of your own barbarity?

Squire Sul. Barbarity! oons what does the woman call barbarity? do I ever meddle with you?

Mrs. Sul. No.

Squire Sul. As for you, sir, I shall take another time.

Count Bel. Ah, begar, and so must I.

Squire Sul. Look'ee, madam, don't think that my anger proceeds from any concern I have for your honour, but for my own, and if you can contrive any way of being a whore without making me a cuckold do it and welcome.

Mrs. Sul. Sir, I thank you kindly, you would allow me the sin but rob me of the pleasure. No, no, I'm resolved never to venture upon the crime without the satisfaction of seeing you punished for't.

Squire Sul. Then will you grant me this, my dear? Let anybody else do you the favour but that Frenchman, for I mortally hate his whole generation. [*Exit.*

Count Bel. Ah, sir, that be ungrateful, for begar, I love some of yours, madam— [*Approaching her.*

Mrs. Sul. No, sir.

Count Bel. No, sir! garzoon, madam, I am not your husband.

Mrs. Sul. 'Tis time to undeceive you, sir. I believed your addresses to me were no more than an amusement, and I hope you will think the same of my complaisance; and to convince you that you ought, you must know, that I brought you hither only to make you instrumental in setting me right with my husband, for he was planted to listen by my appointment.

Count Bel. By your appointment?

Mrs. Sul. Certainly.

Count Bel. And so, madam, while I was telling twenty stories to part you from your husband, begar, I was bringing you together all the while?

Mrs. Sul. I ask your pardon, sir, but I hope this will give you a taste of the virtue of the English ladies.

Count Bel. Begar, madam, your virtue be vera great, but garzoon, your honeste be vera little.

Re-enter DORINDA.

Mrs. Sul. Nay, now, you're angry, sir.

Count Bel. Angry!—*Fair Dorinda* [*Sings and addresses* DORINDA.] Madam, when your ladyship want a fool, send for me. *Fair Dorinda, Revenge, &c.* [*Exit singing.*

Mrs. Sul. There goes the true humour of his nation—resentment with good manners, and the height of anger in a song! Well, sister, you must be judge, for you have heard the trial.

Dor. And I bring in my brother guilty.

Mrs. Sul. But I must bear the punishment. 'Tis hard, sister.

Dor. I own it; but you must have patience.

Mrs. Sul. Patience! the cant of custom—Providence sends no evil without a remedy. Should I lie groaning under a yoke I can shake off, I were accessary to my ruin, and my patience were no better than self-murder.

Dor. But how can you shake off the yoke? your divisions don't come within the reach of the law for a divorce.

Mrs. Sul. Law! what law can search into the remote abyss of nature? what evidence can prove the unaccountable disaffections of wedlock? Can a jury sum up the endless aversions that are rooted in our souls, or can a bench give judgment upon antipathies?

Dor. They never pretended, sister; they never meddle, but in case of uncleanness.

Mrs. Sul. Uncleanness! O sister! casual violation is a transient injury, and may possibly be repaired, but can radical hatreds be ever reconciled? No, no, sister, nature is the first lawgiver, and when she has set tempers opposite, not all the golden links of wedlock nor iron manacles of law can keep 'em fast.

Wedlock we own ordain'd by Heaven's decree,
But such as Heaven ordain'd it first to be;—
Concurring tempers in the man and wife
As mutual helps to draw the load of life.
View all the works of Providence above,
The stars with harmony and concord move;
View all the works of Providence below,
The fire, the water, earth and air, we know,
All in one plant agree to make it grow.
Must man, the chiefest work of art divine,
Be doom'd in endless discord to repine?
No, we should injure Heaven by that surmise,
Omnipotence is just, were man but wise. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Gallery in* Lady BOUNTIFUL'S *House.*

MRS. SULLEN *discovered alone.*

Mrs. Sul. Were I born an humble Turk, where women have no soul nor property, there I must sit contented. But in England, a country whose women are its glory, must women be abused? where women rule, must women be enslaved? Nay, cheated into slavery, mocked by a promise of comfortable society into a wilderness of solitude! I dare not keep the thought about me. Oh, here comes something to divert me!

Enter a Countrywoman.

Wom. I come, an't please your ladyship—you're my lady Bountiful, an't ye?

Mrs. Sul. Well, good woman, go on.

Wom. I come seventeen long mail to have a cure for my husband's sore leg.

Mrs. Sul. Your husband! what, woman, cure your husband!

Wom. Ay, poor man, for his sore leg won't let him stir from home.

Mrs. Sul. There, I confess, you have given me a reason. Well, good woman, I'll tell you what you must do. You must lay your husband's leg

upon a table, and with a chopping-knife you must lay it open as broad as you can, then you must take out the bone, and beat the flesh soundly with a rolling-pin, then take salt, pepper, cloves, mace, and ginger, some sweet-herbs, and season it very well, then roll it up like brawn, and put it into the oven for two hours.

Wom. Heavens reward your ladyship!—I have two little babies too that are piteous bad with the graips, an't please ye.

Mrs. Sul. Put a little pepper and salt in their bellies, good woman.

Enter Lady Bountiful.

I beg your ladyship's pardon for taking your business out of your hands, I have been a-tampering here a little with one of your patients.

Lady Boun. Come, good woman, don't mind this mad creature, I am the person that you want, I suppose. What would you have, woman?

Mrs. Sul. She wants something for her husband's sore leg.

Lady Boun. What's the matter with his leg, goody?

Wom. It come first, as one might say, with a sort of dizziness in his foot, then he had a kind of laziness in his joints, and then his leg broke out, and then it swelled, and then it closed again, and then it broke out again, and then it festered, and then it grew better, and then it grew worse again.

Mrs. Sul. Ha! ha! ha!

Lady Boun. How can you be merry with the misfortunes of other people?

Mrs. Sul. Because my own make me sad, madam.

Lady Boun. The worst reason in the world, daughter; your own misfortunes should teach you to pity others.

Mrs. Sul. But the woman's misfortunes and mine are nothing alike; her husband is sick, and mine, alas! is in health.

Lady Boun. What! would you wish your husband sick?

Mrs. Sul. Not of a sore leg of all things.

Lady Boun. Well, good woman, go to the pantry, get your bellyful of victuals, then I'll give you a receipt of diet-drink for your husband. But d'ye hear, goody, you must not let your husband move too much.

Wom. No, no, madam, the poor man's inclinable enough to lie still. [*Exit.*

Lady Boun. Well, daughter Sullen, though you laugh, I have done miracles about the country here with my receipts.

Mrs. Sul. Miracles indeed, if they have cured anybody; but I believe, madam, the patient's faith goes farther toward the miracle than your prescription.

Lady Boun. Fancy helps in some cases; but there's your husband, who has as little fancy as anybody, I brought him from death's door.

Mrs. Sul. I suppose, madam, you made him drink plentifully of ass's milk.

Enter Dorinda, *who runs to* Mrs. Sullen.

Dor. News, dear sister! news! news!

Enter Archer, *running.*

Arch. Where, where is my lady Bountiful?—Pray, which is the old lady of you three?

Lady Boun. I am.

Arch. O madam, the fame of your ladyship's charity, goodness, benevolence, skill and ability, have drawn me hither to implore your ladyship's help in behalf of my unfortunate master, who is this moment breathing his last.

Lady Boun. Your master! where is he?

Arch. At your gate, madam. Drawn by the appearance of your handsome house to view it nearer, and walking up the avenue within five paces of the court-yard, he was taken ill of a sudden with a sort of I know not what, but down he fell, and there he lies.

Lady Boun. Here, Scrub, Gipsy, all run, get my easy-chair down stairs, put the gentleman in it, and bring him in quickly! quickly!

Arch. Heaven will reward your ladyship for this charitable act.

Lady Boun. Is your master used to these fits?

Arch. O yes, madam, frequently: I have known him have five or six of a night.

Lady Boun. What's his name?

Arch. Lord, madam, he's a-dying! a minute's care or neglect may save or destroy his life.

Lady Boun. Ah, poor gentleman!—Come, friend, show me the way; I'll see him brought in myself. [*Exit with* Archer.

Dor. O sister, my heart flutters about strangely! I can hardly forbear running to his assistance.

Mrs. Sul. And I'll lay my life he deserves your assistance more than he wants it. Did not I tell you that my lord would find a way to come at you? Love's his distemper, and you must be the physician; put on all your charms, summon all your fire into your eyes, plant the whole artillery of your looks against his breast, and down with him.

Dor. O sister! I'm but a young gunner; I shall be afraid to shoot, for fear the piece should recoil, and hurt myself.

Mrs. Sul. Never fear, you shall see me shoot before you, if you will.

Dor. No, no, dear sister, you have missed your mark so unfortunately, that I shan't care for being instructed by you.

Enter Aimwell, *carried in a chair by* Archer *and* Scrub, *and counterfeiting a swoon;* Lady Bountiful *and* Gipsy *following.*

Lady Boun. Here, here, let's see the hartshorn drops.—Gipsy, a glass of fair water! His fit's very strong.—Bless me, how his hands are clinched!

Arch. For shame, ladies, what d'ye do? why don't you help us?—[*To* Dorinda.] Pray, madam, take his hand, and open it, if you can, whilst I hold his head. [Dorinda *takes his hand.*

Dor. Poor gentleman!—Oh!—he has got my hand within his, and squeezes it unmercifully—

Lady Boun. 'Tis the violence of his convulsion, child.

Arch. Oh, madam, he's perfectly possessed in these cases—he'll bite if you don't have a care.

Dor. Oh, my hand! my hand!

Lady Boun. What's the matter with the foolish girl? I have got this hand open you see with a great deal of ease.

Arch. Ay, but, madam, your daughter's hand is somewhat warmer than your ladyship's, and the heat of it draws the force of the spirits that way.

Mrs. Sul. I find, friend, you're very learned in these sorts of fits.

Arch. 'Tis no wonder, madam, for I'm often

troubled with them myself; I find myself extremely ill at this minute. [*Looking hard at* MRS. SULLEN.

Mrs. Sul. I fancy I could find a way to cure you. [*Aside.*

Lady Boun. His fit holds him very long.

Arch. Longer than usual, madam.—Pray, young lady, open his breast, and give him air.

Lady Boun. Where did his illness take him first, pray?

Arch. To-day at church, madam.

Lady Boun. In what manner was he taken?

Arch. Very strangely, my lady. He was of a sudden touched with something in his eyes, which, at the first, he only felt, but could not tell whether 'twas pain or pleasure.

Lady Boun. Wind, nothing but wind!

Arch. By soft degrees it grew and mounted to his brain, there his fancy caught it; there formed it so beautiful, and dressed it up in such gay, pleasing colours, that his transported appetite seized the fair idea, and straight conveyed it to his heart. That hospitable seat of life sent all its sanguine spirits forth to meet, and opened all its sluicy gates to take the stranger in.

Lady Boun. Your master should never go without a bottle to smell to.—Oh,—he recovers!—The lavender water—some feathers to burn under his nose—Hungary water to rub his temples.—Oh, he comes to himself!—Hem a little, sir, hem.—Gipsy! bring the cordial-water.

[AIMWELL *seems to awake in amaze.*

Dor. How d'ye, sir?

Aim. Where am I? [*Rising.*

Sure I have pass'd the gulf of silent death,
And now I land on the Elysian shore!—
Behold the goddess of those happy plains,
Fair Proserpine—
Let me adore thy bright divinity.

[*Kneels to* DORINDA, *and kisses her hand.*

Mrs. Sul. So, so, so! I knew where the fit would end!

Aim. Eurydice perhaps—

How could thy Orpheus keep his word,
And not look back upon thee?
No treasure but thyself could sure have bribed him
To look one minute off thee.

Lady Boun. Delirious, poor gentleman!

Arch. Very delirious, madam, very delirious.

Aim. Martin's voice, I think.

Arch. Yes, my lord.—How does your lordship?

Lady Boun. Lord! did you mind that, girls?

[*Aside to* MRS. SULLEN *and* DORINDA.

Aim. Where am I?

Arch. In very good hands, sir. You were taken just now with one of your old fits, under the trees, just by this good lady's house; her ladyship had you taken in, and has miraculously brought you to yourself, as you see.

Aim. I am so confounded with shame, madam, that I can now only beg pardon; and refer my acknowledgments for your ladyship's care, till an opportunity offers of making some amends. I dare be no longer troublesome.—Martin! give two guineas to the servants. [*Going.*

Dor. Sir, you may catch cold by going so soon into the air, you don't look, sir, as if you were perfectly recovered.

[*Here* ARCHER *talks to* LADY BOUNTIFUL *in dumb show.*

Aim. That I shall never be, madam; my present illness is so rooted that I must expect to carry it to my grave.

Mrs. Sul. Don't despair, sir; I have known several in your distemper shake it off with a fortnight's physic.

Lady Boun. Come, sir, your servant has been telling me that you're apt to relapse if you go into the air: your good manners shan't get the better of ours—you shall sit down again, sir. Come, sir, we don't mind ceremonies in the country—here, sir, my service t'ye.—You shall taste my water; 'tis a cordial I can assure you, and of my own making—drink it off, sir.—[AIMWELL *drinks.*] And how d'ye find yourself now, sir?

Aim. Somewhat better—though very faint still.

Lady Boun. Ay, ay, people are always faint after these fits.—Come, girls, you shall show the gentleman the house.—'Tis but an old family building, sir; but you had better walk about, and cool by degrees, than venture immediately into the air. You'll find some tolerable pictures.—Dorinda, show the gentleman the way. I must go to the poor woman below. [*Exit.*

Dor. This way, sir.

Aim. Ladies, shall I beg leave for my servant to wait on you, for he understands pictures very well?

Mrs. Sul. Sir, we understand originals as well as he does pictures, so he may come along.

[*Exeunt all but* SCRUB, AIMWELL *leading* DORINDA.

Enter FOIGARD.

Foi. Save you, master Scrub!

Scrub. Sir, I won't be saved your way—I hate a priest, I abhor the French, and I defy the devil. Sir, I'm a bold Briton, and will spill the last drop of my blood to keep out popery and slavery.

Foi. Master Scrub, you would put me down in politics, and so I would be speaking with Mrs. Shipsy.

Scrub. Good Mr. Priest, you can't speak with her, she's sick, sir, she's gone abroad, sir, she's—dead two months ago, sir.

Re-enter GIPSY.

Gip. How now, impudence! how dare you talk so saucily to the doctor?—Pray, sir, don't take it ill; for the common people of England are not so civil to strangers, as—

Scrub. You lie! you lie! 'tis the common people that are civillest to strangers.

Gip. Sirrah, I have a good mind to—get you out, I say!

Scrub. I won't.

Gip. You won't, sauce-box! — Pray, doctor, what is the captain's name that came to your inn last night?

Scrub. [*Aside.*] The captain! ah, the devil, there she hampers me again; the captain has me on one side, and the priest on t'other: so between the gown and the sword, I have a fine time on't.—But, *Cedunt arma togæ.*

Gip. What, sirrah, won't you march?

Scrub. No, my dear, I won't march—but I'll walk.—[*Aside.*] And I'll make bold to listen a little too. [*Retires behind, listening.*

Gip. Indeed, doctor, the count has been barbarously treated, that's the truth on't.

Foi. Ah, Mrs. Gipsy, upon my shoul, now, gra, his complainings would mollify the marrow in your bones, and move the bowels of your commisera-

tion! He veeps, and he dances, and he fistles, and he swears, and he laughs, and he stamps, and he sings: in conclusion, joy, he's afflicted *à-la-Françaiss*, and a stranger would not know whider to cry or to laugh with him.

Gip. What would you have me do, doctor?

Foi. Noting, joy, but only hide the count in Mrs. Sullen's closet when it is dark.

Gip. Nothing! is that nothing? it would be both a sin and a shame, doctor.

Foi. Here is twenty louis-d'ors, joy, for your shame; and I will give you an absolution for the shin.

Gip. But won't that money look like a bribe?

Foi. Dat is according as you shall tauk it. If you receive the money beforehand, 'twill be *logice*, a bribe; but if you stay till afterwards, 'twill be only a gratification.

Gip. Well, doctor, I'll take it *logice*. But what must I do with my conscience, sir?

Foi. Leave dat wid me, joy; I am your priest, gra; and your conscience is under my hands.

Gip. But should I put the count into the closet—

Foi. Vel, is dere any shin for a man's being in a closhet? one may go to prayers in a closhet.

Gip. But if the lady should come into her chamber, and go to bed?

Foi. Vel, and is dere any shin in going to bed, joy?

Gip. Ay, but if the parties should meet, doctor?

Foi. Vel den—the parties must be responsible. Do you be after putting the count in the closhet; and leave the shins wid themselves. I will come with the count to instruct you in your chamber.

Gip. Well, doctor, your religion is so pure! Methinks I'm so easy after an absolution, and can sin afresh with so much security, that I'm resolved to die a martyr to't. Here's the key of the garden door, come in the back-way when 'tis late, I'll be ready to receive you; but don't so much as whisper, only take hold of my hand; I'll lead you, and do you lead the count, and follow me. [*Exeunt*.

Scrub. [*Coming forward*.] What witchcraft now have these two imps of the devil been a-hatching here? There's twenty louis-d'ors; I heard that, and saw the purse.—But I must give room to my betters. [*Exit*.

Re-enter AIMWELL, *leading* DORINDA, *and making love in dumb show;* MRS. SULLEN *and* ARCHER *following*.

Mrs. Sul. [*To* ARCHER.] Pray, sir, how d'ye like that piece?

Arch. Oh, 'tis Leda! You find, madam, how Jupiter comes disguised to make love—

Mrs. Sul. But what think you there of Alexander's battles?

Arch. We want only a Le Brun, madam, to draw greater battles, and a greater general of our own. The Danube, madam, would make a greater figure in a picture than the Granicus; and we have our Ramillies to match their Arbela.

Mrs. Sul. Pray, sir, what head is that in the corner there?

Arch. O madam, 'tis poor Ovid in his exile.

Mrs. Sul. What was he banished for?

Arch. His ambitious love, madam.—[*Bowing*.] His misfortune touches me.

Mrs. Sul. Was he successful in his amours?

Arch. There he has left us in the dark.—He was too much a gentleman to tell.

Mrs. Sul. If he were secret, I pity him.

Arch. And if he were successful, I envy him.

Mrs. Sul. How d'ye like that Venus over the chimney?

Arch. Venus! I protest, madam, I took it for your picture; but now I look again, 'tis not handsome enough.

Mrs. Sul. Oh, what a charm is flattery! If you would see my picture there it is over that cabinet. How d'ye like it?

Arch. I must admire anything, madam, that has the least resemblance of you. But, methinks, madam—[*He looks at the picture and* MRS. SULLEN *three or four times, by turns*.] Pray, madam, who drew it?

Mrs. Sul. A famous hand, sir.

[*Here* AIMWELL *and* DORINDA *go off*.

Arch. A famous hand, madam!—Your eyes, indeed, are featured there; but where's the sparkling moisture, shining fluid, in which they swim? The picture, indeed, has your dimples; but where's the swarm of killing Cupids that should ambush there? The lips too are figured out; but where's the carnation dew, the pouting ripeness that tempts the taste in the original?

Mrs. Sul. Had it been my lot to have matched with such a man! [*Aside*.

Arch. Your breasts too—presumptuous man! what, paint Heaven!—Apropos, madam, in the very next picture is Salmoneus, that was struck dead with lightning, for offering to imitate Jove's thunder; I hope you served the painter so, madam!

Mrs. Sul. Had my eyes the power of thunder, they should employ their lightning better.

Arch. There's the finest bed in that room, madam! I suppose 'tis your ladyship's bedchamber.

Mrs. Sul. And what then, sir?

Arch. I think the quilt is the richest that ever I saw. I can't at this distance, madam, distinguish the figures of the embroidery; will you give me leave, madam? [*Goes into the chamber*.

Mrs. Sul. The devil take his impudence!—Sure, if I gave him an opportunity, he durst not offer it?—I have a great mind to try.—[*Goes in after* ARCHER, *but returns hastily*.] 'Sdeath, what am I doing?—And alone, too!—Sister! sister!

[*Runs out*.

Arch. [*Coming out*.] I'll follow her close—
For where a Frenchman durst attempt to storm,
A Briton sure may well the work perform.

[*Going*.

Re-enter SCRUB.

Scrub. Martin! brother Martin!

Arch. O brother Scrub, I beg your pardon, I was not a-going: here's a guinea my master ordered you.

Scrub. A guinea! hi! hi! hi! a guinea! eh—by this light it is a guinea! But I suppose you expect one and twenty shillings in change?

Arch. Not at all; I have another for Gipsy.

Scrub. A guinea for her! faggot and fire for the witch! Sir, give me that guinea, and I'll discover a plot.

Arch. A plot!

Scrub. Ay, sir, a plot, a horrid plot! First, it must be a plot, because there's a woman in't: secondly, it must be a plot, because there's a priest

in't: thirdly, it must be a plot, because there's French gold in't: and fourthly, it must be a plot, because I don't know what to make on't.

Arch. Nor anybody else, I'm afraid, brother Scrub.

Scrub. Truly, I'm afraid so too; for where there's a priest and a woman, there's always a mystery and a riddle. This, I know, that here has been the doctor with a temptation in one hand and an absolution in the other, and Gipsy has sold herself to the devil; I saw the price paid down, my eyes shall take their oath on't.

Arch. And is all this bustle about Gipsy?

Scrub. That's not all; I could hear but a word here and there; but I remember they mentioned a count, a closet, a back-door, and a key.

Arch. The count!—Did you hear nothing of Mrs. Sullen?

Scrub. I did hear some word that sounded that way; but whether it was Sullen or Dorinda, I could not distinguish.

Arch. You have told this matter to nobody, brother?

Scrub. Told! no, sir, I thank you for that; I'm resolved never to speak one word *pro* nor *con*, till we have a peace.

Arch. You're i' th' right, brother Scrub. Here's a treaty a foot between the count and the lady: the priest and the chambermaid are the plenipotentiaries. It shall go hard but I find a way to be included in the treaty.—Where's the doctor, now?

Scrub. He and Gipsy are this moment devouring my lady's marmalade in the closet.

Aim. [*Without.*] Martin! Martin!

Arch. I come, sir, I come.

Scrub. But you forget the other guinea, brother Martin.

Arch. Here, I give it with all my heart.

Scrub. And I take it with all my soul.—[*Exit* ARCHER.] Ecod, I'll spoil your plotting, Mrs. Gipsy! and if you should set the captain upon me, these two guineas will buy me off. [*Exit.*

Re-enter MRS. SULLEN *and* DORINDA, *meeting.*

Mrs. Sul. Well, sister!

Dor. And well, sister!

Mrs. Sul. What's become of my lord?

Dor. What's become of his servant?

Mrs. Sul. Servant! he's a prettier fellow, and a finer gentleman by fifty degrees, than his master.

Dor. O' my conscience, I fancy you could beg that fellow at the gallows-foot!

Mrs. Sul. O' my conscience I could, provided I could put a friend of yours in his room.

Dor. You desired me, sister, to leave you, when you transgressed the bounds of honour.

Mrs. Sul. Thou dear censorious country girl! what dost mean? You can't think of the man without the bedfellow, I find.

Dor. I don't find anything unnatural in that thought: while the mind is conversant with flesh and blood, it must conform to the humours of the company.

Mrs. Sul. How a little love and good company improves a woman! Why, child, you begin to live—you never spoke before.

Dor. Because I was never spoke to.—My lord has told me that I have more wit and beauty than any of my sex; and truly I begin to think the man is sincere.

Mrs. Sul. You're in the right, Dorinda; pride is the life of a woman, and flattery is our daily bread; and she's a fool that won't believe a man there, as much as she that believes him in anything else. But I'll lay you a guinea that I had finer things said to me than you had.

Dor. Done! What did your fellow say to ye?

Mrs. Sul. My fellow took the picture of Venus for mine.

Dor. But my lover took me for Venus herself.

Mrs. Sul. Common cant! Had my spark called me a Venus directly, I should have believed him a footman in good earnest.

Dor. But my lover was upon his knees to me.

Mrs. Sul. And mine was upon his tiptoes to me.

Dor. Mine vowed to die for me.

Mrs. Sul. Mine swore to die with me.

Dor. Mine spoke the softest moving things.

Mrs. Sul. Mine had his moving things too.

Dor. Mine kissed my hand ten thousand times.

Mrs. Sul. Mine has all that pleasure to come.

Dor. Mine offered marriage.

Mrs. Sul. O Lard! d'ye call that a moving thing?

Dor. The sharpest arrow in his quiver, my dear sister! Why, my ten thousand pounds may lie brooding here this seven years, and hatch nothing at last but some ill-natured clown like yours! Whereas, if I marry my lord Aimwell, there will be title, place, and precedence, the Park, the play, and the drawing-room, splendour, equipage, noise, and flambeaux.—*Hey, my lady Aimwell's servants there!—Lights, lights to the stairs!—My lady Aimwell's coach put forward!—Stand by, make room for her ladyship!*—Are not these things moving?—What! melancholy of a sudden?

Mrs. Sul. Happy, happy sister! your angel has been watchful for your happiness, whilst mine has slept regardless of his charge. Long smiling years of circling joys for you, but not one hour for me! [*Weeps.*

Dor. Come, my dear, we'll talk of something else.

Mrs. Sul. O Dorinda! I own myself a woman, full of my sex, a gentle, generous soul, easy and yielding to soft desires; a spacious heart, where love and all his train might lodge. And must the fair apartment of my breast be made a stable for a brute to lie in?

Dor. Meaning your husband, I suppose?

Mrs. Sul. Husband! no; even husband is too soft a name for him.—But, come, I expect my brother here to-night or to-morrow; he was abroad when my father married me; perhaps he'll find a way to make me easy.

Dor. Will you promise not to make yourself easy in the mean time with my lord's friend?

Mrs. Sul. You mistake me, sister. It happens with us as among the men, the greatest talkers are the greatest cowards; and there's a reason for it; those spirits evaporate in prattle, which might do more mischief if they took another course.—Though, to confess the truth, I do love that fellow;—and if I met him dressed as he should be, and I undressed as I should be—look'ee, sister, I have no supernatural gifts—I can't swear I could resist the temptation; though I can safely promise to avoid it; and that's as much as the best of us can do. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* BONIFACE'S *Inn.*

Enter AIMWELL *and* ARCHER *laughing.*

Arch. And the awkward kindness of the good motherly old gentlewoman—

Aim. And the coming easiness of the young one—'Sdeath, 'tis pity to deceive her!

Arch. Nay, if you adhere to those principles, stop where you are.

Aim. I can't stop; for I love her to distraction.

Arch. 'Sdeath, if you love her a hair's breadth beyond discretion, you must go no farther.

Aim. Well, well, anything to deliver us from sauntering away our idle evenings at White's, Tom's, or Will's, and be stinted to bear looking at our old acquaintance, the cards; because our impotent pockets can't afford us a guinea for the mercenary drabs.

Arch. Or be obliged to some purse-proud coxcomb for a scandalous bottle, where we must not pretend to our share of the discourse, because we can't pay our club o'th' reckoning.—Damn it, I had rather spunge upon Morris, and sup upon a dish of bohea scored behind the door!

Aim. And there expose our want of sense by talking criticisms, as we should our want of money by railing at the government.

Arch. Or be obliged to sneak into the side-box, and between both houses steal two acts of a play, and because we han't money to see the other three, we come away discontented, and damn the whole five.

Aim. And ten thousand such rascally tricks—had we outlived our fortunes among our acquaintance.—But now—

Arch. Ay, now is the time to prevent all this:—strike while the iron is hot.—This priest is the luckiest part of our adventure; he shall marry you, and pimp for me.

Aim. But I should not like a woman that can be so fond of a Frenchman.

Arch. Alas, sir! Necessity has no law. The lady may be in distress; perhaps she has a confounded husband, and her revenge may carry her farther than her love. Egad, I have so good an opinion of her, and of myself, that I begin to fancy strange things; and we must say this for the honour of our women, and indeed of ourselves, that they do stick to their men as they do to their *Magna Charta.* If the plot lies as I suspect, I must put on the gentleman.—But here comes the doctor—I shall be ready. [*Exit.*

Enter FOIGARD.

Foi. Sauve you, noble friend.

Aim. O sir, your servant! Pray, doctor, may I crave your name?

Foi. Fat naam is upon me? My naam is Foigard, joy.

Aim. Foigard! a very good name for a clergyman. Pray, doctor Foigard, were you ever in Ireland?

Foi. Ireland! no, joy. Fat sort of plaace is dat saam Ireland? Dey say de people are catched dere when dey are young.

Aim. And some of 'em when they're old:—as for example.—[*Takes* FOIGARD *by the shoulder.*] Sir, I arrest you as a traitor against the government; you're a subject of England, and this morning showed me a commission, by which you served as chaplain in the French army. This is death by our law, and your reverence must hang for't.

Foi. Upon my shoul, noble friend, dis is strange news you tell me! Fader Foigard a subject of England! de son of a burgomaster of Brussels, a subject of England! ubooboo—

Aim. The son of a bog-trotter in Ireland! Sir, your tongue will condemn you before any bench in the kingdom.

Foi. And is my tongue all your evidensh, joy?

Aim. That's enough.

Foi. No, no, joy, for I vil never spake English no more.

Aim. Sir, I have other evidence.—Here, Martin!

Re-enter ARCHER.

You know this fellow?

Arch. [*In a brogue.*] Saave you, my dear cussen, how does your health?

Foi. [*Aside.*] Ah! upon my shoul dere is my countryman, and his brogue will hang mine.—[*To* ARCHER.] *Mynheer, Ick wet neat watt hey zacht, Ick universton ewe neat, sacramant!*

Aim. Altering your language won't do, sir, this fellow knows your person, and will swear to your face.

Foi. Faash! fey, is dere a brogue upon my faash too?

Arch. Upon my soulvation dere ish, joy!—But cussen Mackshane, vil you not put a remembrance upon me?

Foi. Mackshane! by St. Paatrick, dat ish naame shure enough! [*Aside.*

Aim. I fancy, Archer, you have it. [*Aside to* ARCHER.

Foi. The devil hang you, joy! by fat acquaintance are you my cussen?

Arch. Oh, the devil hang yourshelf, joy! you know we were little boys togeder upon de school, and your foster-moder's son was married upon my nurse's chister, joy, and so we are Irish cussens.

Foi. De devil taake de relation! vel, joy, and fat school was it?

Arch. I tinks it vas—aay,—'twas Tipperary.

Foi. No, no, joy; it vas Kilkenny.

Aim. That's enough for us—self-confession,—come, sir, we must deliver you into the hands of the next magistrate.

Arch. He sends you to jail, you're tried next assizes, and away you go swing into purgatory.

Foi. And is it so wid you, cussen?

Arch. It vil be sho wid you, cussen, if you don't immediately confess the secret between you and Mrs. Gipsy. Look'ee, sir, the gallows or the secret, take your choice.

Foi. The gallows! upon my shoul I hate that saam gallow, for it is a diseash dat is fatal to our family. Vel, den, dere is nothing, shentlemens, but Mrs. Shullen would spaak wid the count in her chamber at midnight, and dere is no haarm, joy, for I am to conduct the count to the plash, myshelf.

Arch. As I guessed.—Have you communicated the matter to the count?

Foi. I have not sheen him since.

Arch. Right again! Why then, doctor—you shall conduct me to the lady instead of the count.

Foi. Fat, my cussen to the lady! upon my shoul, gra, dat is too much upon the brogue.

Arch. Come, come, doctor; consider we have got a rope about your neck, and if you offer to

squeak, we'll stop your windpipe, most certainly; we shall have another job for you in a day or two, I hope.

Aim. Here's company coming this way, let's into my chamber, and there concert our affair farther.

Arch. Come, my dear cussen, come along. [*Exeunt.*

Enter BONIFACE, HOUNSLOW, *and* BAGSHOT, *at one door,* GIBBET *at the opposite.*

Gib. Well, gentlemen, 'tis a fine night for our enterprise.

Houn. Dark as hell.

Bag. And blows like the devil; our landlord here has showed us the window where we must break in, and tells us the plate stands in the wainscot cupboard in the parlour.

Bon. Ay, ay, Mr. Bagshot, as the saying is, knives and forks, and cups and cans and tumblers and tankards. There's one tankard, as the saying is, that's near upon as big as me, it was a present to the squire from his godmother, and smells of nutmeg and toast like an East-India ship.

Houn. Then you say we must divide at the stair-head?

Bon. Yes, Mr. Hounslow, as the saying is. At one end of that gallery lies my lady Bountiful and her daughter, and at the other Mrs. Sullen. As for the squire—

Gib. He's safe enough, I have fairly entered him, and he's more than half seas over already. But such a parcel of scoundrels are got about him now, that, egad, I was ashamed to be seen in their company.

Bon. 'Tis now twelve, as the saying is—gentlemen, you must set out at one.

Gib. Hounslow, do you and Bagshot see our arms fixed, and I'll come to you presently.

Houn. Bag. We will. [*Exeunt.*

Gib. Well, my dear Bonny, you assure me that Scrub is a coward?

Bon. A chicken, as the saying is. You'll have no creature to deal with but the ladies.

Gib. And I can assure you, friend, there's a great deal of address and good manners in robbing a lady; I am the most a gentleman that way that ever travelled the road.—But, my dear Bonny, this prize will be a galleon, a Vigo business.—I warrant you we shall bring off three or four thousand pound.

Bon. In plate, jewels, and money, as the saying is, you may.

Gib. Why then, Tyburn, I defy thee! I'll get up to town, sell off my horse and arms, buy myself some pretty employment in the household, and be as snug and as honest as any courtier of 'em all.

Bon. And what think you then of my daughter Cherry for a wife?

Gib. Look'ee, my dear Bonny—Cherry *is the Goddess I adore,* as the song goes; but it is a maxim, that man and wife should never have it in their power to hang one another; for if they should, the Lord have mercy on 'em both! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* BONIFACE'S *Inn.*

[*Knocking without, enter* BONIFACE.]

Bon. Coming! coming!—A coach and six foaming horses at this time o'night! some great man, as the saying is, for he scorns to travel with other people.

Enter SIR CHARLES FREEMAN.

Sir Chas. What, fellow! a public house, and abed when other people sleep?

Bon. Sir, I an't abed, as the saying is.

Sir Chas. Is Mr. Sullen's family abed, think'ee?

Bon. All but the squire himself, sir, as the saying is, he's in the house.

Sir Chas. What company has he?

Bon. Why, sir, there's the constable, Mr. Gage the exciseman, the hunch-backed barber, and two or three other gentlemen.

Sir Chas. I find my sister's letters gave me the true picture of her spouse. [*Aside.*

Enter Squire SULLEN, *drunk.*

Bon. Sir, here's the squire.

Squire Sul. The puppies left me asleep—Sir!

Sir Chas. Well, sir.

Squire Sul. Sir, I am an unfortunate man—I have three thousand pound a year, and I can't get a man to drink a cup of ale with me.

Sir Chas. That's very hard.

Squire Sul. Ay, sir; and unless you have pity upon me, and smoke one pipe with me, I must e'en go home to my wife, and I had rather go to the devil by half.

Sir Chas. But I presume, sir, you won't see your wife to-night, she'll be gone to bed. You don't use to lie with your wife in that pickle?

Squire Sul. What! not lie with my wife! why, sir, do you take me for an atheist or a rake?

Sir Chas. If you hate her, sir, I think you had better lie from her.

Squire Sul. I think so too, friend. But I'm a justice of peace, and must do nothing against the law.

Sir Chas. Law! as I take it, Mr. Justice, nobody observes law for law's sake, only for the good of those for whom it was made.

Squire Sul. But, if the law orders me to send you to jail, you must lie there, my friend.

Sir Chas. Not unless I commit a crime to deserve it.

Squire Sul. A crime! oons, an't I married?

Sir Chas. Nay, sir, if you call marriage a crime, you must disown it for a law.

Squire Sul. Eh! I must be acquainted with you, sir.—But, sir, I should be very glad to know the truth of this matter.

Sir Chas. Truth, sir, is a profound sea, and few there be that dare wade deep enough to find out the bottom on't. Besides, sir, I'm afraid the line of your understanding mayn't be long enough.

Squire Sul. Look'ee, sir, I have nothing to say

to your sea of truth, but, if a good parcel of land can entitle a man to a little truth, I have as much as any he in the country.

Bon. I never heard your worship, as the saying is, talk so much before.

Squire Sul. Because I never met with a man that I liked before.

Bon. Pray, sir, as the saying is, let me ask you one question: are not man and wife one flesh?

Sir Chas. You and your wife, Mr. Guts, may be one flesh, because ye are nothing else; but rational creatures have minds that must be united.

Squire Sul. Minds!

Sir Chas. Ay, minds, sir; don't you think that the mind takes place of the body?

Squire Sul. In some people.

Sir Chas. Then the interest of the master must be consulted before that of his servant.

Squire Sul. Sir, you shall dine with me to-morrow!—Oons, I always thought that we were naturally one.

Sir Chas. Sir, I know that my two hands are naturally one, because they love one another, kiss one another, help one another in all the actions of life; but I could not say so much if they were always at cuffs.

Squire Sul. Then 'tis plain that we are two.

Sir Chas. Why don't you part with her, sir?

Squire Sul. Will you take her, sir?

Sir Chas. With all my heart.

Squire Sul. You shall have her to-morrow morning, and a venison-pasty into the bargain.

Sir Chas. You'll let me have her fortune too?

Squire Sul. Fortune! why, sir, I have no quarrel at her fortune: I only hate the woman, sir, and none but the woman shall go.

Sir Chas. But her fortune, sir—

Squire Sul. Can you play at whisk, sir?

Sir Chas. No, truly, sir.

Squire Sul. Nor at all-fours?

Sir Chas. Neither.

Squire Sul. [*Aside.*] Oons! where was this man bred?—[*Aloud.*] Burn me, sir! I can't go home, 'tis but two a clock.

Sir Chas. For half an hour, sir, if you please—but you must consider 'tis late.

Squire Sul. Late! that's the reason I can't go to bed.—Come, sir! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Lobby before* AIMWELL'S *Chamber in the same.*

Enter CHERRY, *runs across the stage, and knocks at the chamber-door. Enter* AIMWELL *in his nightcap and gown.*

Aim. What's the matter? you tremble, child, you're frighted.

Cher. No wonder, sir—But, in short, sir, this very minute a gang of rogues are gone to rob my lady Bountiful's house.

Aim. How!

Cher. I dogged 'em to the very door, and left 'em breaking in.

Aim. Have you alarmed anybody else with the news?

Cher. No, no, sir, I wanted to have discovered the whole plot, and twenty other things, to your man Martin; but I have searched the whole house, and can't find him: where is he?

Aim. No matter, child; will you guide me immediately to the house?

Cher. With all my heart, sir; my lady Bountiful is my godmother, and I love Mrs. Dorinda so well—

Aim. Dorinda! the name inspires me, the glory and the danger shall be all my own.—Come, my life, let me but get my sword. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Bedchamber in* Lady BOUNTIFUL'S *House.*

MRS. SULLEN *and* DORINDA *discovered.*

Dor. 'Tis very late, sister, no news of your spouse yet?

Mrs. Sul. No, I'm condemned to be alone till towards four, and then perhaps I may be executed with his company.

Dor. Well, my dear, I'll leave you to your rest; you'll go directly to bed, I suppose?

Mrs. Sul. I don't know what to do.—Heigh-ho!

Dor. That's a desiring sigh, sister.

Mrs. Sul. This is a languishing hour, sister.

Dor. And might prove a critical minute if the pretty fellow were here.

Mrs. Sul. Here! what, in my bedchamber at two o'clock o'th' morning, I undressed, the family asleep, my hated husband abroad, and my lovely fellow at my feet!—O 'gad, sister!

Dor. Thoughts are free, sister, and them I allow you.—So, my dear, good night.

Mrs. Sul. A good rest to my dear Dorinda!—[*Exit* DORINDA.] Thoughts free! are they so? Why, then, suppose him here, dressed like a youthful, gay, and burning bridegroom,

Enter ARCHER *unperceived from a closet behind.*

with tongue enchanting, eyes bewitching, knees imploring.—[*Turns, and discovers* ARCHER *kneeling.*]—Ah!—[*Shrieks, and runs to the other side of the stage.*] Have my thoughts raised a spirit?—What are you, sir, a man or a devil?

Arch. A man, a man, madam. [*Rising.*

Mrs. Sul. How shall I be sure of it?

Arch. Madam, I'll give you demonstration this minute. [*Takes her hand.*

Mrs. Sul. What, sir! do you intend to be rude?

Arch. Yes, madam, if you please.

Mrs. Sul. In the name of wonder, whence came ye?

Arch. From the skies, madam—I'm a Jupiter in love, and you shall be my Alcmena.

Mrs. Sul. How came you in?

Arch. I flew in at the window, madam; your cousin Cupid lent me his wings, and your sister Venus opened the casement.

Mrs. Sul. I'm struck dumb with admiration!

Arch. And I—with wonder! [*Looks passionately at her.*

Mrs. Sul. What will become of me?

Arch. How beautiful she looks!—The teeming jolly Spring smiles in her blooming face, and, when she was conceived, her mother smelt to roses, looked on lilies—

Lilies unfold their white, their fragrant charms,
When the warm sun thus darts into their arms. [*Runs to her.*

Mrs. Sul. Ah! [*Shrieks.*

Arch. Oons, madam, what d'ye mean? you'll raise the house.

Mrs. Sul. Sir, I'll wake the dead before I bear this!—What! approach me with the freedoms of a keeper! I'm glad on't, your impudence has cured me.

Arch. If this be impudence,—[*Kneels*] I leave to your partial self: no panting pilgrim, after a tedious, painful voyage, e'er bowed before his saint with more devotion.

Mrs. Sul. [*Aside.*] Now, now, I'm ruined if he kneels!—[*Aloud.*] Rise, thou prostrate engineer, not all thy undermining skill shall reach my heart.—Rise, and know I am a woman without my sex; I can love to all the tenderness of wishes, sighs, and tears—but go no farther.—Still, to convince you that I'm more than woman, I can speak my frailty, confess my weakness even for you—but—

Arch. For me! [*Going to lay hold on her.*

Mrs. Sul. Hold, sir! build not upon that; for my most mortal hatred follows if you disobey what I command you now.—Leave me this minute.—[*Aside.*] If he denies I'm lost.

Arch. Then you'll promise—

Mrs. Sul. Anything another time.

Arch. When shall I come?

Mrs. Sul. To-morrow, when you will.

Arch. Your lips must seal the promise.

Mrs. Sul. Psha!

Arch. They must! they must!—[*Kisses her.*] Raptures and paradise!—And why not now, my angel? the time, the place, silence, and secrecy, all conspire—And the now conscious stars have pre-ordained this moment for my happiness.

[*Takes her in his arms.*

Mrs. Sul. You will not! cannot sure!

Arch. If the sun rides fast, and disappoints not mortals of to-morrow's dawn, this night shall crown my joys.

Mrs. Sul. My sex's pride assist me!

Arch. My sex's strength help me!

Mrs. Sul. You shall kill me first!

Arch. I'll die with you. [*Carrying her off.*

Mrs. Sul. Thieves! thieves! murder!—

Enter SCRUB *in his breeches, and one shoe.*

Scrub. Thieves! thieves! murder! popery!

Arch. Ha! the very timorous stag will kill in rutting time. [*Draws, and offers to stab* SCRUB.

Scrub. [*Kneeling.*] O pray, sir, spare all I have, and take my life!

Mrs. Sul. [*Holding* ARCHER'S *hand.*] What does the fellow mean?

Scrub. O madam, down upon your knees, your marrowbones!—he's one of 'em.

Arch. Of whom?

Scrub. One of the rogues—I beg your pardon, one of the honest gentlemen that just now are broke into the house.

Arch. How!

Mrs. Sul. I hope you did not come to rob me?

Arch. Indeed I did, madam, but I would have taken nothing but what you might ha' spared; but your crying thieves has waked this dreaming fool, and so he takes 'em for granted.

Scrub. Granted! 'tis granted, sir, take all we have.

Mrs. Sul. The fellow looks as if he were broke out of Bedlam.

Scrub. Oons, madam, they're broke into the house with fire and sword! I saw them, heard them, they'll be here this minute.

Arch. What, thieves!

Scrub. Under favour, sir, I think so.

Mrs. Sul. What shall we do, sir?

Arch. Madam, I wish your ladyship a good night.

Mrs. Sul. Will you leave me?

Arch. Leave you! Lord, madam, did not you command me to be gone just now, upon pain of your immortal hatred?

Mrs. Sul. Nay, but pray, sir—

[*Takes hold of him.*

Arch. Ha! ha! ha! now comes my turn to be ravished.—You see now, madam, you must use men one way or other; but take this by the way, good madam, that none but a fool will give you the benefit of his courage, unless you'll take his love along with it.—How are they armed, friend?

Scrub. With sword and pistol, sir.

Arch. Hush!—I see a dark lantern coming through the gallery.—Madam, be assured I will protect you, or lose my life.

Mrs. Sul. Your life! no, sir, they can rob me of nothing that I value half so much; therefore now, sir, let me entreat you to be gone.

Arch. No, madam, I'll consult my own safety for the sake of yours; I'll work by stratagem. Have you courage enough to stand the appearance of 'em!

Mrs. Sul. Yes, yes, since I have 'scaped your hands, I can face anything.

Arch. Come hither, brother Scrub! don't you know me?

Scrub. Eh, my dear brother, let me kiss thee.

[*Kisses* ARCHER.

Arch. This way—here—

[ARCHER *and* SCRUB *hide behind the bed.*

Enter GIBBET, *with a dark lantern in one hand, and a pistol in the other.*

Gib. Ay, ay, this is the chamber, and the lady alone.

Mrs. Sul. Who are you, sir? what would you have? d'ye come to rob me?

Gib. Rob you! alack a day, madam, I'm only a younger brother, madam; and so, madam, if you make a noise, I'll shoot you through the head; but don't be afraid, madam.—[*Laying his lantern and pistol upon the table.*] These rings, madam; don't be concerned, madam, I have a profound respect for you, madam; your keys, madam; don't be frighted, madam, I'm the most of a gentleman.—[*Searching her pockets.*] This necklace, madam; I never was rude to a lady;—I have a veneration—for this necklace—

[*Here* ARCHER *having come round, and seized the pistol, takes* GIBBET *by the collar, trips up his heels, and claps the pistol to his breast.*

Arch. Hold, profane villain, and take the reward of thy sacrilege!

Gib. Oh! pray, sir, don't kill me; I an't prepared.

Arch. How many is there of 'em, Scrub?

Scrub. Five-and-forty, sir.

Arch. Then I must kill the villain, to have him out of the way.

Gib. Hold, hold, sir, we are but three upon my honour.

Arch. Scrub, will you undertake to secure him?

Scrub. Not I, sir; kill him, kill him!

Arch. Run to Gipsy's chamber, there you'll find the doctor; bring him hither presently.—[*Exit* SCRUB, *running.*] Come, rogue, if you have a short prayer, say it.

Gib. Sir, I have no prayer at all; the government has provided a chaplain to say prayers for us on these occasions.

Mrs. Sul. Pray, sir, don't kill him: you fright me as much as him.

Arch. The dog shall die, madam, for being the occasion of my disappointment.—Sirrah, this moment is your last.

Gib. Sir, I'll give you two hundred pounds to spare my life.

Arch. Have you no more, rascal?

Gib. Yes, sir, I can command four hundred, but I must reserve two of 'em to save my life at the sessions.

Re-enter SCRUB *with* FOIGARD.

Arch. Here, doctor, I suppose Scrub and you between you may manage him. Lay hold of him, doctor. [FOIGARD *lays hold of* GIBBET.

Gib. What! turned over to the priest already!—Look'ee, doctor, you come before your time; I an't condemned yet, I thank ye.

Foi. Come, my dear joy, I vil secure your body and your shoul too; I vil make you a good catholic, and give you an absolution.

Gib. Absolution! can you procure me a pardon, doctor?

Foi. No, joy.

Gib. Then you and your absolution may go to the devil!

Arch. Convey him into the cellar, there bind him:—take the pistol, and if he offers to resist, shoot him through the head—and come back to us with all the speed you can.

Scrub. Ay, ay, come, doctor, do you hold him fast, and I'll guard him.

[*Exit* FOIGARD *with* GIBBET, SCRUB *following.*

Mrs. Sul. But how came the doctor—

Arch. In short, madam—[*Shrieking without.*] 'Sdeath! the rogues are at work with the other ladies—I'm vexed I parted with the pistol; but I must fly to their assistance.—Will you stay here, madam, or venture yourself with me?

Mrs. Sul. [*Taking him by the arm.*] Oh, with you, dear sir, with you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Another Bedchamber in the same.*

Enter HOUNSLOW *and* BAGSHOT, *with drawn swords, haling in* LADY BOUNTIFUL *and* DORINDA.

Houn. Come, come, your jewels, mistress!

Bag. Your keys, your keys, old gentlewoman!

Enter AIMWELL *and* CHERRY.

Aim. Turn this way, villains! I durst engage an army in such a cause. [*He engages them both.*

Dor. O madam, had I but a sword to help the brave man!

Lady Boun. There's three or four hanging up in the hall; but they won't draw. I'll go fetch one however. [*Exit.*

Enter ARCHER *and* MRS. SULLEN.

Arch. Hold, hold, my lord! every man his bird, pray.

[*They engage man to man,* HOUNSLOW *and* BAGSHOT *are thrown and disarmed.*

Cher. [*Aside.*] What! the rogues taken! then they'll impeach my father; I must give him timely notice. [*Runs out.*

Arch. Shall we kill the rogues?

Aim. No, no, we'll bind them.

Arch. Ay, ay.—[*To* MRS. SULLEN.] Here, madam, lend me your garter.

Mrs. Sul. [*Aside.*] The devil's in this fellow! he fights, loves, and banters, all in a breath.—[*Aloud.*] Here's a cord that the rogues brought with 'em, I suppose.

Arch. Right, right, the rogue's destiny, a rope to hang himself.—Come, my lord—this is but a scandalous sort of an office, [*Binding the* Highwaymen *together,*] if our adventures should end in this sort of hangman-work; but I hope there is something in prospect, that—

Enter SCRUB.

Well, Scrub, have you secured your Tartar?

Scrub. Yes, sir, I left the priest and him disputing about religion.

Aim. And pray carry these gentlemen to reap the benefit of the controversy.

[*Exit* SCRUB *with the* Highwaymen *bound.*

Mrs. Sul. Pray, sister, how came my lord here?

Dor. And pray how came the gentleman here?

Mrs. Sul. I'll tell you the greatest piece of villany— [*They talk in dumb show.*

Aim. I fancy, Archer, you have been more successful in your adventures than the housebreakers.

Arch. No matter for my adventure, yours is the principal.—Press her this minute to marry you—now while she's hurried between the palpitation of her fear and the joy of her deliverance, now while the tide of her spirits are at high-flood—throw yourself at her feet, speak some romantic nonsense or other—address her, like Alexander, in the height of his victory, confound her senses, bear down her reason, and away with her.—The priest is now in the cellar, and dare not refuse to do the work.

Re-enter LADY BOUNTIFUL.

Aim. But how shall I get off without being observed?

Arch. You a lover, and not find a way to get off!—Let me see—

Aim. You bleed, Archer.

Arch. 'Sdeath, I'm glad on't; this wound will do the business. I'll amuse the old lady and Mrs. Sullen about dressing my wound, while you carry off Dorinda.

Lady Boun. Gentlemen, could we understand how you would be gratified for the services—

Arch. Come, come, my lady, this is no time for compliments; I'm wounded, madam.

Lady Boun. Mrs. Sul. How! wounded!

Dor. I hope, sir, you have received no hurt?

Aim. None but what you may cure—

[*Makes love in dumb show.*

Lady Boun. Let me see your arm, sir—I must have some powder-sugar to stop the blood.—O me! an ugly gash, upon my word, sir, you must go into bed.

Arch. Ay, my lady, a bed would do very well.—[*To* MRS. SULLEN.] Madam, will you do me the favour to conduct me to a chamber?

Lady Boun. Do, do, daughter—while I get the lint and the probe and the plaster ready.

[*Runs out one way,* AIMWELL *carries off* DORINDA *another.*

Arch. Come, madam, why don't you obey your mother's commands?

Mrs. Sul. How can you, after what is passed, have the confidence to ask me?

Arch. And if you go to that, how can you, after what is passed, have the confidence to deny me? Was not this blood shed in your defence, and my life exposed for your protection? Look'ee, madam, I'm none of your romantic fools, that fight giants and monsters for nothing; my valour is downright Swiss; I'm a soldier of fortune, and must be paid.

Mrs. Sul. 'Tis ungenerous in you, sir, to upbraid me with your services!

Arch. 'Tis ungenerous in you, madam, not to reward 'em.

Mrs. Sul. How! at the expense of my honour?

Arch. Honour! can honour consist with ingratitude? If you would deal like a woman of honour, do like a man of honour. D'ye think I would deny you in such a case?

Enter Servant.

Ser. Madam, my lady ordered me to tell you, that your brother is below at the gate. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Sul. My brother! Heavens be praised!—Sir, he shall thank you for your services, he has it in his power.

Arch. Who is your brother, madam?

Mrs. Sul. Sir Charles Freeman.—You'll excuse me, sir; I must go and receive him. [*Exit.*

Arch. Sir Charles Freeman! 'sdeath and hell! my old acquaintance. Now unless Aimwell has made good use of his time, all our fair machine goes souse into the sea like the Eddystone. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.—*The Gallery in the same.*

Enter AIMWELL *and* DORINDA.

Dor. Well, well, my lord, you have conquered; your late generous action will, I hope, plead for my easy yielding; though I must own, your lordship had a friend in the fort before.

Aim. The sweets of Hybla dwell upon her tongue!—Here, doctor—

Enter FOIGARD, *with a book in his hand.*

Foi. Are you prepared boat?

Dor. I'm ready. But first, my lord, one word—I have a frightful example of a hasty marriage in my own family; when I reflect 'upon't it shocks me. Pray, my lord, consider a little—

Aim. Consider! do you doubt my honour or my love?

Dor. Neither: I do believe you equally just as brave: and were your whole sex drawn out for me to choose, I should not cast a look upon the multitude if you were absent. But, my lord, I'm a woman; colours, concealments may hide a thousand faults in me, therefore know me better first; I hardly dare affirm I know myself in anything except my love.

Aim. [*Aside.*] Such goodness who could injure! I find myself unequal to the task of villain; she has gained my soul, and made it honest like her own.—I cannot, cannot hurt her.—[*Aloud.*] Doctor, retire.—[*Exit* FOIGARD.] Madam, behold your lover and your proselyte, and judge of my passion by my conversion!—I'm all a lie, nor dare I give a fiction to your arms; I'm all counterfeit, except my passion.

Dor. Forbid it, Heaven! a counterfeit!

Aim. I am no lord, but a poor needy man, come with a mean, a scandalous design to prey upon your fortune; but the beauties of your mind and person have so won me from myself, that like a trusty servant, I prefer the interest of my mistress to my own.

Dor. Sure I have had the dream of some poor mariner, a sleepy image of a welcome port, and wake involved in storms!—Pray, sir, who are you?

Aim. Brother to the man whose title I usurped, but stranger to his honour or his fortune.

Dor. Matchless honesty!—Once I was proud, sir, of your wealth and title, but now am prouder that you want it: now I can show my love was justly levelled, and had no aim but love.—Doctor, come in.

Enter FOIGARD *at one door,* GIPSY *at another, who whispers* DORINDA.

[*To* FOIGARD.] Your pardon, sir, we shan't want you now.—[*To* AIMWELL.] Sir, you must excuse me—I'll wait on you presently. [*Exit with* GIPSY.

Foi. Upon my shoul, now, dis is foolish. [*Exit.*

Aim. Gone! and bid the priest depart!—It has an ominous look.

Enter ARCHER.

Arch. Courage, Tom!—Shall I wish you joy?

Aim. No.

Arch. Oons, man, what ha' you been doing?

Aim. O Archer! my honesty, I fear, has ruined me.

Arch. How!

Aim. I have discovered myself.

Arch. Discovered! and without my consent? What! have I embarked my small remains in the same bottom with yours, and you dispose of all without my partnership?

Aim. O Archer! I own my fault.

Arch. After conviction—'tis then too late for pardon.—You may remember, Mr. Aimwell, that you proposed this folly: as you begun, so end it. Henceforth I'll hunt my fortune single—so farewell!

Aim. Stay, my dear Archer, but a minute.

Arch. Stay! what, to be despised, exposed, and laughed at! No, I would sooner change conditions with the worst of the rogues we just now bound, than bear one scornful smile from the proud knight that once I treated as my equal.

Aim. What knight?

Arch. Sir Charles Freeman, brother to the lady that I had almost—but no matter for that, 'tis a cursed night's work, and so I leave you to make the best on't.

Aim. Freeman!—One word, Archer. Still I have hopes; methought she received my confession with pleasure.

Arch. 'Sdeath, who doubts it?

Aim. She consented after to the match; and still I dare believe she will be just.

Arch. To herself, I warrant her, as you should have been.

Aim. By all my hopes she comes, and smiling comes!

Re-enter DORINDA.

Dor. Come, my dear lord—I fly with impatience to your arms—the minutes of my absence was a tedious year. Where's this priest?

Re-enter FOIGARD.

Arch. Oons, a brave girl!

Dor. I suppose, my lord, this gentleman is privy to our affairs?

Arch. Yes, yes, madam, I'm to be your father.

Dor. Come, priest, do your office.

Arch. Make haste, make haste, couple 'em any way.—[*Takes* AIMWELL's *hand.*] Come, madam, I'm to give you—

Dor. My mind's altered; I won't.

Arch. Eh!—

Aim. I'm confounded!

Foi. Upon my shoul, and sho is myshelf.

Arch. What's the matter now, madam?

Dor. Look'ee, sir, one generous action deserves another.—This gentleman's honour obliged him to hide nothing from me; my justice engages me to conceal nothing from him. In short, sir, you are the person that you thought you counterfeited; you are the true lord viscount Aimwell, and I wish your lordship joy.—Now, priest, you may be gone; if my lord is pleased now with the match, let his lordship marry me in the face of the world.

Aim. Arch. What does she mean?

Dor. Here's a witness for my truth.

Enter SIR CHARLES FREEMAN *and* MRS. SULLEN.

Sir Chas. My dear lord Aimwell, I wish you joy.

Aim. Of what?

Sir Chas. Of your honour and estate. Your brother died the day before I left London; and all your friends have writ after you to Brussels;—among the rest, I did myself the honour.

Arch. Heark'ee, sir knight, don't you banter now?

Sir Chas. 'Tis truth, upon my honour.

Aim. Thanks to the pregnant stars that formed this accident!

Arch. Thanks to the womb of time that brought it forth!—away with it!

Aim. Thanks to my guardian angel that led me to the prize! [*Taking* DORINDA's *hand.*

Arch. And double thanks to the noble sir Charles Freeman.—My lord, I wish you joy.—My lady, I wish you joy.—Egad, sir Freeman, you're the honestest fellow living!—'Sdeath, I'm grown strange airy upon this matter!—My lord, how d'ye?—A word, my lord; don't you remember something of a previous agreement, that entitles me to the moiety of this lady's fortune, which I think will amount to five thousand pounds?

Aim. Not a penny, Archer; you would ha' cut my throat just now, because I would not deceive this lady.

Arch. Ay, and I'll cut your throat again, if you should deceive her now.

Aim. That's what I expected; and to end the dispute, the lady's fortune is ten thousand pounds, we'll divide stakes: take the ten thousand pounds or the lady.

Dor. How! is your lordship so indifferent?

Arch. No, no, no, madam! his lordship knows very well that I'll take the money; I leave you to his lordship, and so we're both provided for.

Enter COUNT BELLAIR.

Count Bel. *Mesdames et Messieurs*, I am your servant trice humble! I hear you be rob here.

Aim. The ladies have been in some danger, sir.

Count Bel. And, begar, our inn be rob too!

Aim. Our inn! by whom?

Count Bel. By the landlord, begar!—Garzoon, he has rob himself, and run away!

Arch. Robbed himself!

Count Bel. Ay, begar, and me too of a hundre pound.

Arch. A hundred pounds?

Count Bel. Yes, that I owed him.

Aim. Our money's gone, Frank.

Arch. Rot the money! my wench is gone.—[*To* COUNT BELLAIR.] *Savez-vous quelquechose de mademoiselle* Cherry?

Enter a Countryman *with a box and a letter.*

Coun. Is there one Martin here?

Arch. Ay, ay—who wants him?

Coun. I have a box here, and letter for him. [*Gives the box and letter to* ARCHER, *and exit.*

Arch. Ha! ha! ha! what's here? Legerdemain!—By this light, my lord, our money again!—But this unfolds the riddle.—[*Opening the letter.*] Hum, hum, hum!—Oh, 'tis for the public good, and must be communicated to the company. [*Reads.*

Mr. Martin,

My father being afraid of an impeachment by the rogues that are taken to-night, is gone off; but if you can procure him a pardon, he'll make great discoveries that may be useful to the country. Could I have met you instead of your master to-night, I would have delivered myself into your hands, with a sum that much exceeds that in your strong-box, which I have sent you, with an assurance to my dear Martin that I shall ever be his most faithful friend till death.

CHERRY BONIFACE.

There's a billet-doux for you! As for the father, I think he ought to be encouraged; and for the daughter—pray, my lord, persuade your bride to take her into her service instead of Gipsy.

Aim. I can assure you, madam, your deliverance was owing to her discovery.

Dor. Your command, my lord, will do without the obligation. I'll take care of her.

Sir Chas. This good company meets opportunely in favour of a design I have in behalf of my unfortunate sister. I intend to part her from her husband—gentlemen, will you assist me?

Arch. Assist you! 'sdeath, who would not?

Count Bel. Assist! garzoon, we all assist!

Enter SQUIRE SULLEN *and* SCRUB.

Squire Sul. What's all this? They tell me, spouse, that you had like to have been robbed.

Mrs. Sul. Truly, spouse, I was pretty near it, had not these two gentlemen interposed.

Squire Sul. How came these gentlemen here?

Mrs. Sul. That's his way of returning thanks, you must know.

Count Bel. Garzoon, the question be apropos for all dat.

Sir Chas. You promised last night, sir, that you would deliver your lady to me this morning.

Squire Sul. Humph!

Arch. Humph! what do you mean by humph? Sir, you shall deliver her—in short, sir, we have saved you and your family; and if you are not civil, we'll unbind the rogues, join with 'em, and set fire to your house. What does the man mean? not part with his wife!

Count Bel. Ay, garzoon, de man no understan common justice.

Mrs. Sul. Hold, gentlemen, all things here must move by consent, compulsion would spoil us; let my dear and I talk the matter over, and you shall judge it between us.

Squire Sul. Let me know first who are to be our judges. Pray, sir, who are you?

Sir Chas. I am sir Charles Freeman, come to take away your wife.

Squire Sul. And you, good sir?

Aim. Charles viscount Aimwell, come to take away your sister.

Squire Sul. And you, pray, sir?

Arch. Francis Archer, esquire, come—

Squire Sul. To take away my mother, I hope. Gentlemen, you're heartily welcome; I never met with three more obliging people since I was born!—And now, my dear, if you please, you shall have the first word.

Arch. And the last, for five pound!

Mrs. Sul. Spouse!

Squire Sul. Rib!

Mrs. Sul. How long have we been married?

Squire Sul. By the almanac, fourteen months; but by my account, fourteen years.

Mrs. Sul. 'Tis thereabout by my reckoning.

Count Bel. Garzoon, their account will agree.

Mrs. Sul. Pray, spouse, what did you marry for?

Squire Sul. To get an heir to my estate.

Sir Chas. And have you succeeded?

Squire Sul. No.

Arch. The condition fails of his side.—Pray, madam, what did you marry for?

Mrs. Sul. To support the weakness of my sex by the strength of his, and to enjoy the pleasures of an agreeable society.

Sir Chas. Are your expectations answered?

Mrs. Sul. No.

Count Bel. A clear case! a clear case!

Sir Chas. What are the bars to your mutual contentment?

Mrs. Sul. In the first place, I can't drink ale with him.

Squire Sul. Nor can I drink tea with her.

Mrs. Sul. I can't hunt with you.

Squire Sul. Nor can I dance with you.

Mrs. Sul. I hate cocking and racing.

Squire Sul. And I abhor ombre and piquet.

Mrs. Sul. Your silence is intolerable.

Squire Sul. Your prating is worse.

Mrs. Sul. Have we not been a perpetual offence to each other? a gnawing vulture at the heart?

Squire Sul. A frightful goblin to the sight?

Mrs. Sul. A porcupine to the feeling?

Squire Sul. Perpetual wormwood to the taste?

Mrs. Sul. Is there on earth a thing we could agree in?

Squire Sul. Yes—to part.

Mrs. Sul. With all my heart.

Squire Sul. Your hand.

Mrs. Sul. Here.

Squire Sul. These hands joined us, these shall part us.—Away!

Mrs. Sul. North.

Squire Sul. South.

Mrs. Sul. East.

Squire Sul. West—far as the poles asunder.

Count Bel. Begar, the ceremony be vera pretty!

Sir Chas. Now, Mr. Sullen, there wants only my sister's fortune to make us easy.

Squire Sul. Sir Charles, you love your sister, and I love her fortune; every one to his fancy.

Arch. Then you won't refund?

Squire Sul. Not a stiver.

Arch. Then I find, madam, you must e'en go to your prison again.

Count Bel. What is the portion?

Sir Chas. Ten thousand pound, sir.

Count Bel. Garzoon, I'll pay it, and she shall go home wid me.

Arch. Ha! ha! ha! French all over.—Do you know, sir, what ten thousand pound English is?

Count Bel. No, begar, not justement.

Arch. Why, sir, 'tis a hundred thousand livres.

Count Bel. A hundre tousand livres! A garzoon, me canno' do't, your beauties and their fortunes are both too much for me.

Arch. Then I will.—This night's adventure has proved strangely lucky to us all—for captain Gibbet in his walk had made bold, Mr. Sullen, with your study and escritoir, and had taken out all the writings of your estate, all the articles of marriage with your lady, bills, bonds, leases, receipts to an infinite value, I took 'em from him, and I deliver 'em to Sir Charles.

[*Gives* SIR CHARLES FREEMAN *a parcel of papers and parchments.*

Squire Sul. How, my writings!—my head aches consumedly.—Well, gentlemen, you shall have her fortune, but I can't talk. If you have a mind, sir Charles, to be merry, and celebrate my sister's wedding and my divorce, you may command my house—but my head aches consumedly.—Scrub, bring me a dram.

Arch. [*To* MRS. SULLEN.] Madam, there's a country dance to the trifle that I sung to-day; your hand, and we'll lead it up.

A Dance.

'Twould be hard to guess which of these parties is the better pleased, the couple joined, or the couple parted; the one rejoicing in hopes of an untasted happiness, and the other in their deliverance from an experienced misery.

Both happy in their several states we find,
Those parted by consent, and those conjoin'd.
Consent, if mutual, saves the lawyer's fee,
Consent is law enough to set you free.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE

DESIGNED TO BE SPOKEN IN THE "BEAUX-STRATAGEM."

If to our play your judgment can't be kind,
Let its expiring author pity find:
Survey his mournful case with melting eyes,
Nor let the bard be damn'd before he dies.
Forbear, you fair, on his last scene to frown,
But his true exit with a plaudit crown;
Then shall the dying poet cease to fear
The dreadful knell, while your applause he hears.
At Leuctra so the conquering Theban died,
Claim'd his friends' praises, but their tears denied:
Pleased in the pangs of death he greatly thought
Conquest with loss of life but cheaply bought.
The difference this,—the Greek was one wo
fight,
As brave, though not so gay as serjeant Kite;
Ye sons of Will's, what's that to those w
write?
To Thebes alone the Grecian owed his bays,
You may the bard above the hero raise,
Since yours is greater than Athenian praise.

THE END.

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